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# THE EVE
# OF AN EMPIRE'S FALL.

BY

MADAME CARETTE (*nèe* BOUVET).

AUTHORESS OF "MY MISTRESS, THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE; OR, COURT LIFE AT THE TUILERIES."

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## CHAPTER I.

**The declaration of war—Queen Isabella and General Prim—The Prince and Princess of Hohenzollern—The King of Prussia at Ems—Count Benedetti—Commemorative slab—Negotiations—Monsieur Rancès—The Baron de Thile—Words of the Emperor—Count Bismarck—Prince Frederick Charles—Eventual Renunciation of Prince Leopold.**

> "Truth is like the light;
> It pierces the thickest clouds."

On July 18, 1870, quivering France awoke in the midst of one of the greatest scenes of her history.

War was declared!

The causes of many great political conflicts can be traced back to events of quite an unimportant nature; and to unearth and discuss these events is the work of the historian.

On July 2, 1870, Isabella II., Queen of Spain, abdicated in favour of her son, the young Prince of the Asturias.

As he had been exiled since the month of September 1865, and had taken refuge in France, the Queen concluded that the majority in the country was hostile to his return. She hoped, by renouncing her rights to the throne, to put an end to the anarchy which had been desolating the Peninsula, and to rally to the side of her son (who reigned later on under the name of Alphonso XII.) the sympathies of the Spanish people.

At the same time, it transpired that the Spanish General Prim was offering the throne of Spain to Prince Leopold, a prince of the Hohenzollern family, and son of Prince Antony, the head of the younger branch of the Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen.

A few years previous to this—in 1865—I happened to see the Hohenzollern prince at the Compiègne fêtes, as well as his wife, the Princess Antonia, Duchess of Saxony, Infanta of Portugal, daughter of

King Dom Ferdinand. Wedded in the year 1861, at the age of sixteen, the Princess was at this time at the height of her rare beauty. Tall, slender, with hair of a pronounced blonde, and a very pale complexion, she had the refined features of a Greek statue combined with considerable grace and elegance. It was said that the then King of Prussia, a great admirer of beauty, nursed the intention of crowning this lovely forehead. There was assuredly more in this than could be placed to the score of family expediency.

Prince Leopold was a good-looking but insignificant man. At the Prussian Court and in diplomatic circles he was called familiarly "The Little One," even at the moment when his name had become the pretext for stirring events.

The news of this candidature violently excited public opinion. The recent annexation of the Schleswig and Holstein duchies had unmasked the desire for conquest predominant in Prussia. She had only just crushed Austria at Sadowa, and in his speeches the King of Prussia proclaimed that the work of German unity was not yet accomplished.

France could not remain indifferent to the intention of setting up a prince of the House of Prussia, and a near relation of the King, on the other side of our Pyrenean frontier. This was an abandonment of the venerable policy inaugurated by Louis XIV., who, by placing his grandson on the throne of Spain, pointed out the interest we had in closely allying ourselves with our neighbours. The same policy had been followed later on by the Emperor Napoleon I. in causing his brother, King Joseph, to reign in Spain, and again, under the Government of July, by the marriage of the Duke of Montpensier with an Infanta.

The negotiations entered into between the French and Prussian Governments in consequence of this incident proceeded rapidly. At the very commencement of the dispute General Prim was known to be ready to decide the matter off-hand, and do without the intervention of the

*Cortes*, in order to lend the force of an accomplished fact to Prussian designs upon Spain.

There was therefore no time to spare.

In the month of July, 1870, King William was at Ems, which it was his custom to visit every year to drink the waters. It was during that period of the summer when, it seems, all statesmen, by common accord, take a spell of rest. In Prussia, as also in France, the *Corps Diplomatique* was dispersed.

Count Bismarck had retired to his estate at Varzin, and the King, at Ems, appeared to have no other care than that of drinking glasses of water! Our ambassador at Berlin, Count Benedetti, was himself taking a holiday at Carlsbad. It was here that he received from the Duke de Gramont, our Minister of Foreign Affairs, the order to rejoin the King of Prussia, for the purpose of presenting to him the observations of the Emperor Napoleon's Government on the subject of the candidature of Prince Leopold.

It was at Ems that the King had been notified of the proposals made by General Prim. It was at Ems that the negotiations went on, negotiations which the King took pains to invest with a perfectly personal character, repudiating any meddling of his Government in this affair, which he managed alone with our ambassador, direct. It was at Ems that, on the 14th of July, Count Benedetti took leave of the King of Prussia. It is there that on the promenade is now to be seen a commemorative slab, a flag-stone of about two feet square, indicating the exact spot where King William stood during his last conversation with the French ambassador. A simple date—July 14, 1870—is engraved on the stone, and every year, on the 4th of September, wreaths of flowers are deposited there.

Such a number of events have followed each other since this time that it is necessary to recall the diplomatic incidents which culminated in the declaration of war.

The offer of the Spanish throne made to the Hohenzollern prince by General Prim was officially announced on July 3, 1870; but it was no news for our diplomats.

Indeed, as far back as the month of March, 1869, the French Embassy at Berlin were cognisant of secret negotiations entered into on this subject between the Prussian Chancellor and the heads of the Spanish Government.

The attention of our ambassador, Count Benedetti, had been aroused by a rather mysterious journey to Berlin undertaken by M. Rancès, the Spanish ambassador at Vienna, and formerly accredited in the same character to the Court of Berlin.

Informed of this fact, our Minister for Foreign Affairs instructed Count Benedetti to inquire into the matter.

Already the name of Prince Leopold, whose brother had gone to reign in Roumania in 1866, had been mentioned with those of the Duke d'Aosta and the Duke de Montpensier, as being liable to be called to the Spanish crown.

This contingency troubled the Emperor greatly.

"The Duke de Montpensier's candidature," he said, "is purely anti-dynastic; it only affects me; I can accept it. The candidature of the Prince of Hohenzollern, however, is essentially anti-national; the country will not suffer it; it must be prevented."

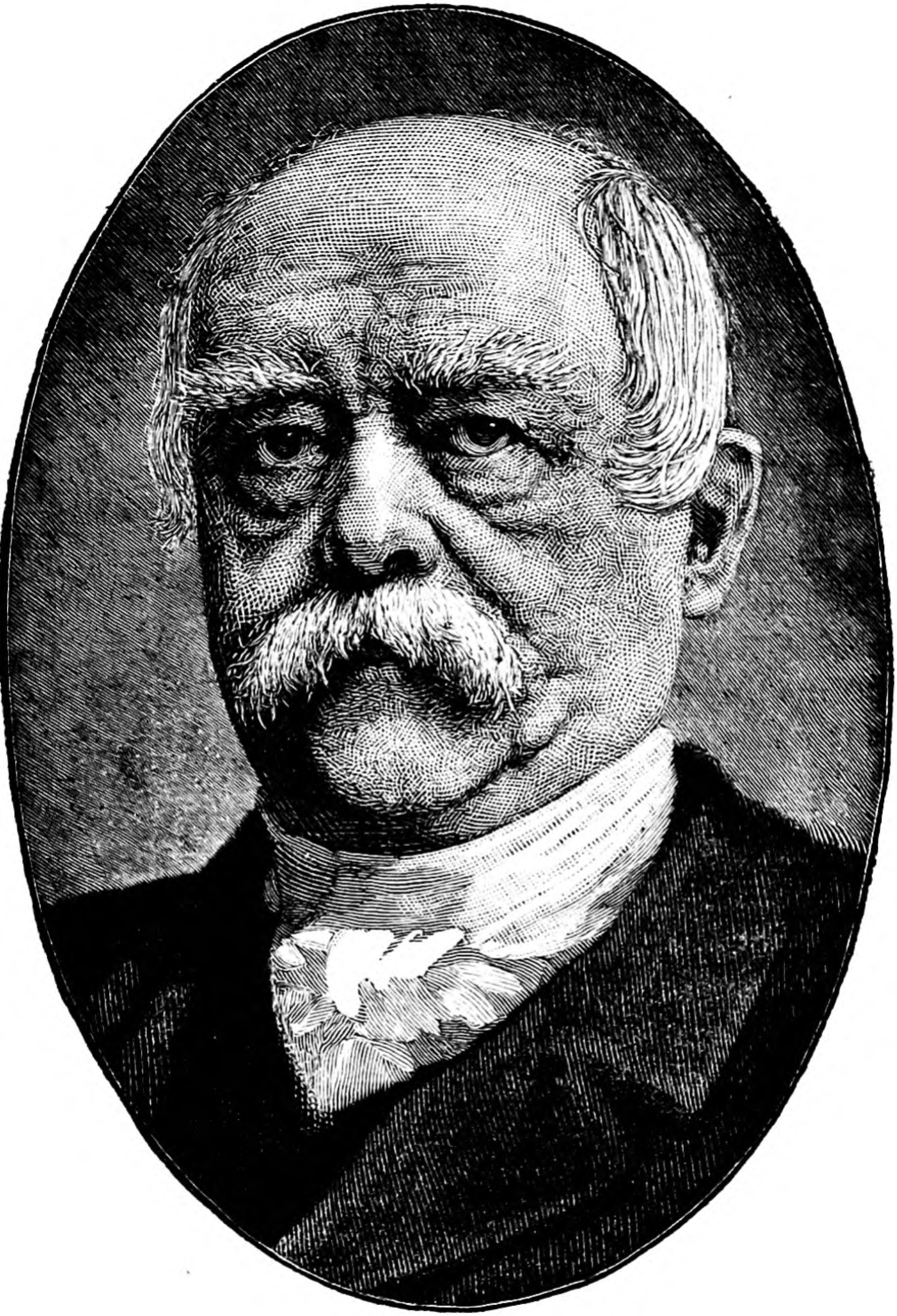
Our ambassador had to inform the Prussian Government that France would not lend herself to the execution of this scheme.

In a conversation which he had with the Baron de Thile, Under-Secretary of State, Count Benedetti received the assurance that, at the time of his journey to Berlin, M. Rancès, the Spanish statesman, had made no proposal whatever to any prince of the King's family. The Baron declared that in order to provide for a vacation of the throne, the *Cortes* would divide their votes between the Duke d'Aosta and the Duke de Montpensier, and then their votes would be re-united in favour of whichever of the two princes would accept their proposals. He was, in fact, so clear as to his statements that he did not hesitate to engage his word of honour. But it was possible that M. de Thile was ignorant of the King of Prussia's real intention.

A short time after this, Count Benedetti drew forth an explanation direct from M. de Bismarck himself. Writing on May 11, 1869, he said, "The President of the Council has not sought to decline conversation on this subject. He represented to me that the candidature of Prince Leopold could only have an ephemeral duration, and that it would expose him to even more dangers than disappointments. 'In this conviction,' he said, 'the King, who does not wish to submit this matter to his Government, would certainly abstain, should the occasion arise, from advising him to acquiesce in the vote of the *Cortes*. Prince Antony partakes of this opinion,' added M. de Bismarck, 'and from the necessity to which he has been put of coming to the assistance of Prince

Charles of Roumania, he has arrived at the conviction that sovereign power is a great burden, and he is in no way disposed to aid his eldest son to ascend the throne of Spain.' Without concealing from me that he had had occasion to confer upon this subject with the King and with Prince Antony, M. de Bismarck confined himself to the observations of which I have given you the substance."

Further on, M. Benedetti adds, "If I were to appeal to the experience which I have acquired of the sense which it is proper to attach to the language of the President of the Council, I should be inclined to believe that he has not opened his entire mind to me. I pointed out to him that Prince Leopold could not defer to the wish of the *Cortes* without the assent of the King, and that it was for his Majesty to dictate to the Prince the course he ought to take in such a circumstance. M. de Bismarck admitted this. But instead of assuring me that the King had irrevocably decided to recommend his abstention, he



BISMARCK.

returned to the subject of the perils with which the new sovereign of Spain would be surrounded from the very commencement. He then went on to express the opinion that, besides this, no election of any prince whatever would be proceeded with; that the personal and ambitious views of the men who had got possession of power in Spain would prove a more serious obstacle than was generally supposed, and he mentioned the name of General Prim. In the hope of inducing him to state precisely the exact import of his words, I replied that I should take care to inform you of his opinions, and I represented that if the Government of the Emperor was closely watching the events of which Spain was the theatre, it was a matter of the very first importance to him to follow up their development. M. de Bismarck repeated, without adding anything to them, the explanations he had already given me, informing me, however, that *Prince Frederick Charles would have been disposed to pursue an adventure in Spain*, but that an insurmountable difficulty rose up before him, that of religion, which, in the eyes of the Spanish people, could not be got over, even by means of a conversion. 'Although,' added M. de Bismarck, 'he had proved himself a valiant and distinguished officer, this prince had never given proof of political ability, and would not know how to conduct himself amid the complications which would crop up in Spain.'"

M. de Bismarck's objection in the case of Prince Frederick Charles on the score of religion did not exist in the case of Prince Leopold, as the younger branch of the Hohenzollerns belonged to the Catholic religion.

This difference of faith, which at times creates difficulties in the interior policy of the Prussian Court, procures, however, for the house of Hohenzollern alliances with the princely families of the great Catholic Powers.

In taking up again the slender threads of this intrigue, we find the Prussian Government secretly resolved to instil into the minds of the European Governments the idea of the possibility of Prussian domination in Spain, where French influence was the more directly interested.

One must be very blind, or very strange to the import of diplomatic utterances, not to perceive what there was hidden under these explanations. Every word of such a statesman as M. de Bismarck has a calculated aim. If, on the one hand, he intimates that Prince Leopold's accession to the throne of Spain could not be other than an ephemeral adventure, one cannot be mistaken as to his motive for negligently letting fall in the course of this important interview the name of Prince Frederick Charles. Does not this incidental remark reveal a cleverly-concerted plan on the part of Prussia to threaten us, at a given moment, by enfolding our frontiers within the circle of its cannons?

Two Prussian princes are there, under the hand of the great statesman, who may choose either of them according as events shall develop themselves in one way or the other.

Prince Frederick Charles, one of the victors of Sadowa, ardent in fight and knowledge of warfare, would not hesitate to crush with a hand of iron any resistance shown by a people morally conquered. The other, Prince Leopold, was a man of no stability, but belonging to the Catholic religion, husband of an Infanta of Portugal, a princess who would be near to her own country, and on whose graces some hope might be based of captivating the Madrid aristocracy.

If, as the Chancellor Bismarck declared, Prince Antony of Hohenzollern did not wish to risk his personal fortune, one of the largest princely fortunes in Europe, in the political enterprises of his children; if Prince Leopold dreaded the revolutionary passions he was about to raise by unloosing a civil war to the knife among a people resolved to resist his domination; if the King of Prussia washed his hands of the question; if the Prussian Government was not informed of it; if public men in Spain held over the accession of the throne to further their personal ambition—who was it who had continued the secret practices which culminated in the month of July, 1870, in the official offer of the throne of Spain made by General Prim to Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, and accepted by him?

The question having entered into this new phase, Count Benedetti asked King William, by way of guarantee, for the sanction of his sovereign authority, definitively to forbid Prince Leopold to accept the crown of Spain.

The King appeared to yield. He consented to acquaint Prince Leopold of the difficulties raised by his accession to the throne of Spain, the while laying stress upon this, that he neither could nor would prescribe anything in his sovereign character or enter into any engagement whatever.

This, however, was the essential point for us.

At this moment Prince Leopold was travelling in Switzerland.

It was through the medium of Prince

Antony of Hohenzollern that his resolution renouncing the throne of Spain was notified to the Madrid Cabinet.

On the 12th of July the Duke de Gramont announced from the tribune of the *Corps Législatif* that Prince Leopold had withdrawn his candidature. This concession seemed to give full satisfaction to the Emperor's protests. Among the public the incident was considered to be at an end, and that all fear of a conflict was dispelled.

Unfortunately, the same confidence could not exist in the mind of the French Government. The ground for the disagreement which existed between the two sovereigns—the refusal of King William's guarantee—had been kept secret ; and, from a feeling of exalted prudence, the Duke de Gramont had not made known the manner in which the news of Prince Leopold's renunciation had been conveyed to him, in order not to envenom the question by a public debate, as long as the slightest hope of an agreement could be cherished.

On the 12th of July, M. de Olozaga, the Spanish Ambassador in Paris, was present at the sitting of the *Corps Législatif* when a telegram was brought to him while in the tribune of the *Corps Diplomatique.* It was the announcement made to him by his Government of Prince Leopold's decision. He gave it his attention, and showed it to the Baron de Beyens, the Belgian Minister, who read it. He then hastened to communicate it to the President of the Council at that same sitting.

It was in this indirect manner, with a diplomatic off-handedness amounting almost to disdain—the Prussian Embassy not having communicated with the French Cabinet—that a solution of so grave an import was notified to us.

Nevertheless M. Emile Ollivier showed signs of lively satisfaction at the news, and passing through the *Salle des Pas Perdus,* in order to convey the tidings without delay to the Emperor, he waved the telegram, saying :

" It is peace ! it is peace ! "

The news spread through Paris with the rapidity of lightning, and fortunes were made and lost on the Bourse in the course of the day.

Previous to this, the Government had made attempts to obtain a diplomatic intervention of the European Cabinets, and on the 8th of July, before this reply was communicated, Lord Lyons had written to Lord Granville dealing with the question in the name of the Duke de Gramont, in order to ascertain whether the co-operation of the British Government might be secured, should an intervention of the foreign Powers be needed.

In the conversation which took place between Baron de Werther and the Duke de Gramont, immediately after the communication of this despatch, our Minister of Foreign Affairs concluded by saying that no doubt the will of the King had operated upon the decision of Prince Leopold. Baron de Werther formally repelled this interpretation. "I contradict this opinion," he wrote to his Government, "and I declare that the withdrawal certainly emanated from the Prince of Hohenzollern's own initiative."

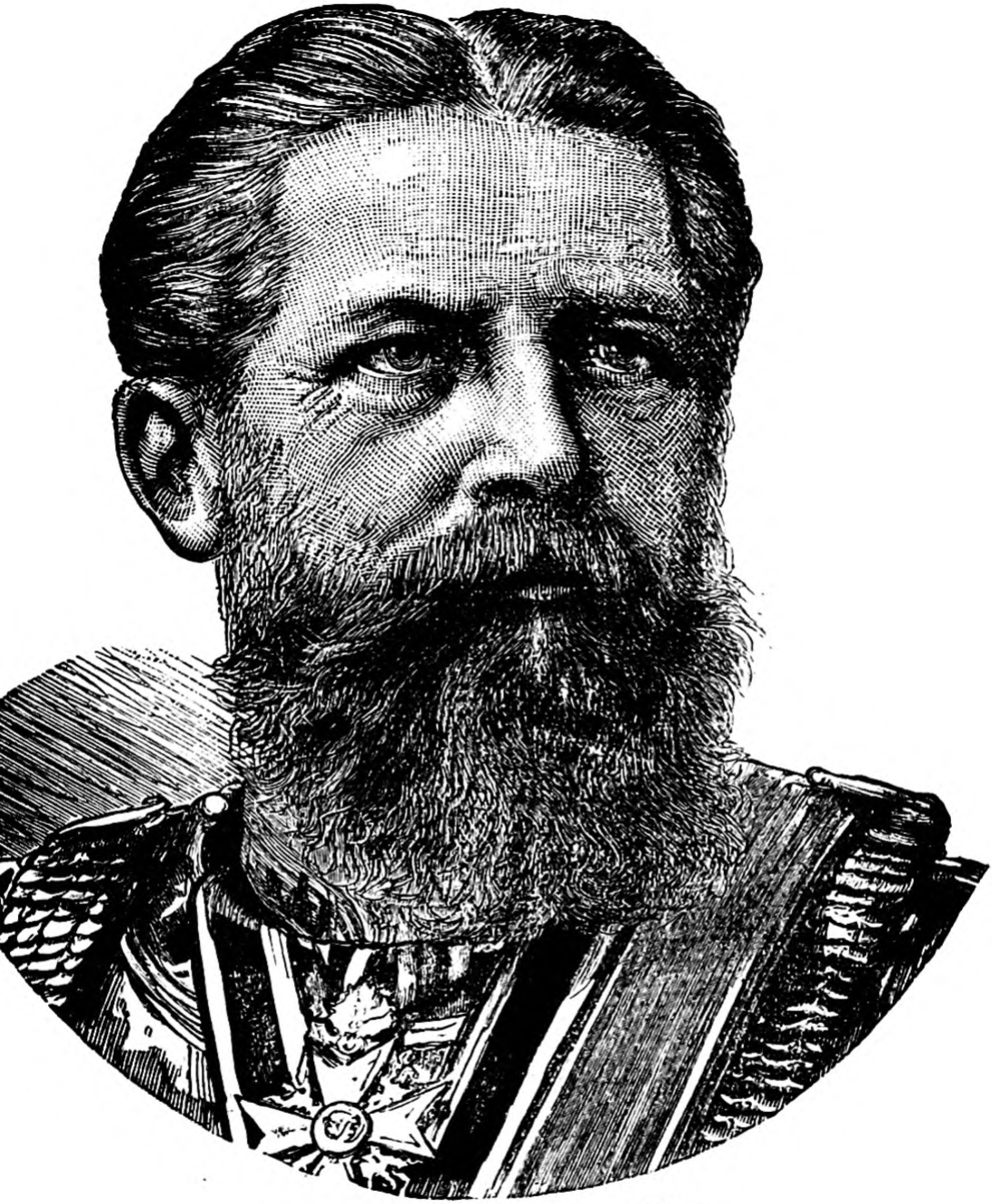
While these events were being accomplished, M. Benedetti pressed the King at Ems to prevent a conflict between two military powers like France and Prussia, the consequences of which would be so formidable. The King again declared that the French Government must consider the renunciation of Prince Leopold a sufficient satisfaction, but that he himself would impose nothing upon him in his character as sovereign, after having authorized him, as head of the family, to accept the Spanish throne.

In vain did our ambassador represent to the King that this project having been already abandoned and taken up again, the King's word alone could reassure the French Government as to the sequel of his intentions. The King remained immovable.

On the morning of the 14th of June, Count Benedetti, meeting the King, who was taking his glass of water at the well, asked him to grant him a fresh audience in order to submit to him a few more observations.

The King replied that this step would be quite useless, and that he had nothing to add to his previous statements. He then turned away. The eye-witnesses of this scene passed offensive comments on the attitude of the King, and hence arose the untruthful rumour which was spread abroad that the King of Prussia had rudely dismissed the French Ambassador, which was not the case.

The fact was that King William wished to remain the absolute arbiter of the situation. He wanted to place France under the *régime* of perpetual apprehension. For upon Europe was imposed the necessity of providing for the vacancy in the throne of Spain. If, in defiance of her own interests, France allowed a Prussian Prince to establish himself on the Pyrenean frontier, it would be a moral debasement the consequences of which would be



FREDERICK, CROWN PRINCE OF GERMANY.

incalculable. Prussia had found the tender point by which she could the most surely wound our national dignity. Choosing her time with unequalled diplomatic cunning, she had brought us to take the initiative in a declaration of war, when this design had for a long time past been already fixed in the mind of the King.

Prophets after the event have affected to say that the accession of a Prussian Prince to the throne of Spain was a matter of no consequence, and that the Spanish people would have made very short work of a domination not in sympathy with its national genius.

But of the terribleness of the embraces of Prussia, our unfortunate eastern provinces serve as a cruel example.

On the 15th of July the Crown Prince of Prussia made the public official announcement of the mobilization of the army and the navy. In the diary published after his death we read this significant entry:

"July 16.—Germany rises as one man. She will work out her unity."

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## CHAPTER II.

Hostility of Prussia—The Countess de Pourtalès—General Blumenthal and Lord Albemarle—1867—The Exhibition—The Sovereigns in Paris—The Emperor of Russia—Berezowski's insult—Monsieur Raimbeaux—Ball at the Russian Embassy—Arrival of the King of Prussia in Paris—Monsieur de Bismarck—The Buttes-Chaumont—Marshal Moltke and the Paris water—A waltz with M. de Bismarck.

For many years past the friends of France, when they had occasion to visit Prussia, had been struck with the anti-French feeling which manifested itself publicly on the other side of the Rhine.

In 1868, the Countess de Pourtalès made some family visits to Berlin, and was present at a dinner given in her honour by Count Schleinitz, the King's house-steward. This nobleman, very assiduous in his attentions to the fair Countess, reproached her on the score of her preference for Paris, and expressed his regret that she did not choose Berlin as a residence.

"I am Alsacian," answered the Countess, "and that will tell you how much I love France."

"Very well! Since you will not belong to us," said Count Schleinitz, "we must go and take the beautiful Alsace. Before eighteen months are over, it will be a Prussian province, and then, with it, we shall possess you."

Throughout the journey which she then made, Madame de Pourtalès was struck with the animosity which was openly shown towards us.

On her return to France she saw the Emperor at Compiègne, and, with much emotion, repeated to him some of the unfriendly remarks she had heard.

"Through what thick clouds, then," asked the Emperor, "have these beautiful blue eyes of yours regarded the future? Through very black clouds, I fear; but it requires two to make a war, and we do not desire it."

Some time previous to that, General Blumenthal, having gone to England, was hunting in Norfolk with Lord Albemarle, who expressed to him a desire to visit Berlin in order to be present at the Prussian military manœuvres.

"Don't take that trouble," said the General; "we shall soon be able to show you a grand review in the Champ de Mars at Paris."

And that was the kind of wit which was the most in fashion in Prussia at this date in all classes of society.

In September, 1869, Colonel Stoffel and a large number of foreign officers had been invited by King William to be present at the manœuvres of the first *corps d'armée* in Pomerania. When he arrived at Stettin his uniform was recognized. Instantly his carriage was surrounded and assailed with stones and pebbles. "Dog of a Frenchman!" the people called after him, also hurling at him other gross insults.

M. Stoffel, not wishing to make a scene, and under the pretext of urgent business, begged the King to excuse him, and left immediately.

No French uniform, it appears, had been seen in these remote regions since 1813. During this time Prussian officers were treated in our country with the most perfect courtesy.

As early as the 3rd of July, 1858, the *Augsburg Gazette* expressed itself in the following terms:—

"If Germany wishes it, she can become a first-class maritime power far easier than either France or Russia, and, if necessary, she can break the peace at the same time with her Eastern neighbour, Russia, and her Western neighbour, France; thrust the French beyond the Vosges, and the Russians beyond the Vistula; deliver Alsace, Lorraine, and the Baltic from the unnatural union of which they to-day form a part; and, lastly, she can dictate peace in Paris as well as St. Petersburg. This is what might happen were Germany united, and that it is possible is known at Paris, as at St. Petersburg. Let Germany, then, spare no sacrifice to increase her forces."

In the meantime the Emperor lost no time in taking heed of these warnings. Seeing that Prussia, Russia, Austria, and Italy were increasing their armies, and bringing the number of men liable to be called under the flag to twelve and fifteen hundred thousand, the Emperor resolved to enter upon a transformation of the army corresponding with these new armaments. Taking counsel with the most competent military men—Niel, Canrobert, MacMahon, and Trochu—the Emperor formed a High Commission, of which he reserved to himself the presidency, the duties of which were to raise the roll of the army to the level of what is called, alas! modern progress.

At this time, 1866, our military forces numbered 650,000 men. The Commission was of opinion that to preserve to France its rank of a great Power, she required an army of 800,000 combatants, supported by a reserve of 400,000 men. Every combination calculated to make these new changes fall as lightly as possible on the country was studied, and the creation of a national guard *mobile* was decided upon, whose members were liable to military service, and in which discharged men would remain incorporated during a certain number of years.

A note in the *Moniteur* of the 12th of December, 1866, announced these new measures.

"This scheme," said the note, "gives to France 1,200,000 disciplined soldiers, and only makes a slight increase in the charges of the budget. It furnishes the nation with a design of defence rather than of aggression, and renders it capable of defying invasion from any quarter."

The Opposition criticized these enlargements of the army, and attributed them to personal views. "It is the work of Cæsarism," it was said. "The Emperor wishes to militarize the nation in order the better to enslave it and to stifle liberal aspirations under a military despotism."

The Bill was brought before the *Corps Législatif*, and gave rise to the liveliest debates. Monsieur Jules Favre protested eloquently from the tribune. "We are told," he said, "that it is requisite that France should be armed like her neighbours; that her security consists in her being formed into brigades, and armed in readiness for any emergency, in her having heaps of powder and shot in her magazines. My conscience protests against propositions of the kind."

Monsieur Magnin added: "Standing armies, in theory, have already been judged and condemned. The future belongs to the armed democracy."

At length Monsieur Thiers, bringing to his colleagues the authority of his word and the knowledge that his exhaustive studies had given him of military matters, after having spoken for some time of the figures presented by the Commission as being those of the different armies of Europe, and notably of Prussia, exclaimed:

"*Those figures are entirely chimerical.*

In fact, gentlemen, we must put no faith in this phantasmagoria of figures which are to-day paraded all over Europe. . . . What! Italy is said to have 900,000 men to oppose to us, and Prussia 1,300,000, making 2,200,000 men under arms between these two Powers! *Allons donc! These are nothing but fables, never having had the slightest reality*" (*Moniteur*, January 1, 1868).

"I hope," said Monsieur Jules Simon, "that we shall have this justice rendered us, that it will be acknowledged that every time when it has been a question of organizing what is called an armed peace, we have been found opposed to all the measures brought forward for attaining that end."

The Bill brought in by the Government underwent such serious modifications that the Emperor, seeing his aim for the national security subverted, decided to withdraw it. It was re-introduced later on, but so much reduced in scope that the spirit of the Bill was entirely changed.

The Session of the *Corps Législatif* was drawing to a close, and every demand for "a credit" connected with the army gave rise to protestations. Marshal Niel asked for 1,800,000 *chassépots,* they granted him 1,200,000. He asked for 110,000,000 francs for fortifications, they granted him 36,000,000; for 36,000,000 francs for the artillery, they gave him 2,500,000 francs.

General Ducrot, who had studied all the strategical resources of the *corps d'armée* which he commanded at Strasburg, laid before the Emperor, on a journey which he took in 1869, a complete plan, having for its object the creation of an intrenched camp destined to protect the whole of our Alsacian frontier. The Emperor approved General Ducrot's plan. Considerable sums were required to raise this strategic barrier, and its execution had to be postponed.

The contempt of military matters manifested by the party of the Liberal Opposition, and the delusive confidence into which they sought to be lulled, found an echo even among the most trusted partisans of the Imperial Government.

In 1869, at the time of the general elections, the professions of faith of most of the deputies were based upon promises of disarmament. The Emperor was deeply grieved to see a large number of those who, until then, had been attached to his policy, enter upon this path, which he regarded as fatal.

The Emperor held in high esteem the intellect and talents of Colonel Stoffel, who was for a long time military *attaché* at Berlin; and his very remarkable works are to-day of the highest interest to all those who are preoccupied with military and diplomatic questions. His reports often formed the subject of the Emperor's conversations; he read them attentively, and annotated them with his own hand. His confidence in this distinguished officer was readily put down to be a mania by those about him; and often, when the Emperor appeared to be preoccupied, I have heard the remark made: "No doubt he has got another report from Stoffel."

In the shape of certain military researches, Monsieur Stoffel had rendered assistance in the compilation of the "History of Julius Cæsar," in which work the Emperor found mental recreation during many years; and the liking which the Emperor had for Colonel Stoffel, and the value he attached to his communications, were attributed to the kindly recollections of this collaboration.

In 1869 the idea was conceived of giving Colonel Stoffel the assistance of a second military *attaché* at Berlin. Captain Hepp was chosen for this post, a distinguished officer, and one of the Emperor's household. He went to Compiègne to receive his instructions before departing on his mission. It was in the midst of a series of fêtes; the Duke de Gramont was there, and I can still hear him saying to Monsieur Hepp: "I am glad that the choice has fallen upon you; I hope, my dear captain, that you won't be, like Stoffel, a bird of ill-omen who sees the dark side of everything."

A fortuitous circumstance hindered the

departure of Captain Hepp, and he did not go to Berlin.

According to M. Stoffel, war with France had become a vital question. Since 1813 Prussia had sought to unite itself with the other portions of Germany, for which object she sought to hold it under her sway. Up to 1866, however, the aspiration could not be realized, in consequence of the small extent of its territory and of the relatively small figure of its population (eighteen millions of inhabitants). Colonel Stoffel explains the situation in a striking manner:

"Suddenly," he says, in one of his remarkable military reports (August 12, 1869), "this Power reveals itself to the world by the thunder-clap of 1866. Hercules feels himself a man, and immediately this pretension to dominate all the Germanic races no longer knows any bounds. . . . This fact admitted as incontestable," adds Monsieur Stoffel, "another one strikes the mind. Let us ask ourselves why Prussia did not seize upon all the German States after the battle of Königgratz, or, why she does not at this present day display a greater audacity in order to join the Southern States to the Northern Confederation? Every one will reply on the instant: 'For fear of a war with France.' And, indeed, in whatever direction Prussia looks, she perceives no one but France to impede her in the accomplishment of her designs. We have only to consider that the Prussian nation is brimful of pride, vigour, and ambition; that she has in the highest degree a consciousness of her own valour; that historically she looks upon France as an old enemy—and we shall easily arrive at a notion of the feelings of distrust, bitterness, and hate which the situation, as an outcome of the events of 1866, has nourished within her with regard to France. . . . The Prussian people are quite as proud as the French, and more impressed with their own capabilities; they are energetic, tenacious, ambitious, full of estimable and solid qualities; but they are uncouth, to a certain extent arrogant, and void of all generosity. And it is this nation which has undertaken, cost what it may, to settle the question of German unity, to which France cannot and will not consent. And this grave question has reared itself between two nations equally susceptible, proud, ambitious, and powerful; which regard each other as enemies of long standing. We must therefore expect that a conflict will arise some day both desperate and terrible."

Opinions like these depict in a startling manner the nature of our relations with Prussia at this date.

Have not a thousand tell-tale revelations unmasked the underhand dealings of the Prussian Government? That army of spies on the watch in every corner of the country —concealed beneath the workman's blouse, the valet's livery, or the hawker's pack, or disguised as strolling musicians—have we not seen them disappear at a given moment, to return later on, guiding the Prussian troops, and possessing an intimate acquaintance with the topography of our country?

Even Monsieur de Moltke himself did

not disdain to visit Lorraine as a tourist, pencil in hand; and has not Prussia, in fact, over and over again, put a veto on the proposition made by the Emperor for a simultaneous disarmament?

In 1867, at the time of the Universal Exhibition, when the Emperor invited all nations to a peaceful contest, in which each one should display its taste and genius, it was a Krupp cannon that Prussia sent us—sinister forerunner of her intentions!

The years roll on rapidly!

In 1870 there was present in the minds of all of us the recollection of those fêtes which, a few years before, had brought to Paris all the sovereigns of Europe. But during this short period profound changes had taken place in our own country and around us.

When, in 1867, the Emperor and Empress opened the Universal Exhibition, could any one have foreseen that these holiday shouts were so soon to be changed into wails of mourning? that events worthy only of a barbarous age were to take the place of this joyful fraternizing and friendly encouragement of industry and genius?

On the 1st of April, 1867, when the *Daumonts* which conveyed the Emperor and Empress left the Tuileries at about one o'clock, the Champs Elysées were filled by an immense crowd collected to meet the sovereign, in order to show by their ardent enthusiasm their gratitude for the prosperity, the order, and the well-being, which then reigned in the country. It was in the midst of a triumphant ovation that their Majesties arrived on the Champ de Mars by one of those grand avenues newly opened, and which had added, as it were, another western wing to the city.

The representatives of the great bodies of the State, the Imperial family, the Court, the Corps Diplomatique, awaited the Emperor and Empress in front of the grand entrance to the Exhibition opening upon the avenue of La Bourdonnais. The immense lobby, more than a hundred yards in length, decorated with trophies, exotic plants, statues, and fountains, was filled by the crowd of exhibitors.

Each of the great States of Europe had sent as its representative one of the princes most nearly allied to the throne. For England, the Prince of Wales; for Holland, the Prince of Orange; for Russia, the Prince of Leuchtenberg; for Belgium, the Count of Flanders, newly affianced to a Hohenzollern princess; and for Italy, the Duke d'Aosta.

During the few months which the Exhibition of 1867 lasted, the Empire reached its apogee. France, by the prodigious development of its wealth, had attracted to herself capital from all nations; and by the firmness and dignity of his government the Emperor had placed her in the foremost rank of the Great Powers.

The Empire has been reproached with having attracted to Paris all the princes of Europe, who came, it was said, in search of amusement. But the generous hospitality of the Emperor, his prestige, the graciousness of the Empress, the elegance of a Court where the accomplishments of the mind, the attractions of art, and all the luxuries of sport, united to captivate the guests of France—this was the secret of the charm which drew towards us the *élite* of the whole world, of which Paris seemed to have become the capital.

To-day we pass through it, we lounge for a while in it, but no one stays there.

In 1867 the immense expanse of the Universal Exhibition covered all the space of the Champ de Mars. Seven enclosures, surrounded by a circular park, created as if by magic, communicated each with the other, containing within their concentric circles a vast garden. In the centre rose the pavilion destined to receive the Crown diamonds, that rare collection of precious stones which has since been ruthlessly dispersed.

Each of these enclosures was devoted, according to its extent, to machinery, to agriculture, to the fine arts, and to the various branches of industry, so that one found united all the productions of the same nationality, and might, on following somest man in all his Empire, was above all the object of an especially assiduous attention. He was cheered on every occasion when he showed himself; and the indignant population, by redoubling its enthusiasm, protested against the attempt on his life.

That expression, which has remained famous: "*Vive la Pologne, monsieur!*" with which the Czar was saluted on visiting the Palais de Justice, was repeated to me a few moments after it had been pronounced by one of the French generals who had the honour of accompanying the Emperor of Russia. This was followed a few days after by the attempt of Berezowski, a Polish refugee, who, abusing the safe asylum afforded him, made a cowardly attempt to assassinate the august guest who trusted himself to our hospitality. The insult, and the ball also, however, whizzed over the Czar's head, who treated them both with the same disdain.

Monsieur Floquet's exclamation had perhaps one advantage: it was the instigation of greater vigilance being shown in guarding the person of the Czar.

To give the particulars of the dastardly attempt. On returning from the grand review which had been held on the Longchamps racecourse, in honour of the monarchs, the Emperor's carriage, in which were seated with him the Emperor of Russia, the Czarewitch, and the Grand Duke Vladimir, was surrounded by an immense crowd along the whole way.

On arriving near the cascade, M. Raimbeaux, the Emperor's equerry, who had the honour of escorting him that day, and who was on horseback close to the imperial carriage, saw a man raise his arm with a brisk movement, and level a pistol at the Czar: it was Berezowski. M. Raimbeaux had the presence of mind to throw himself forward, and thus covered the Czar with his body. His horse received the ball in its head, at exactly the level on which the Czar was sitting in the carriage.

The Emperor took in the situation at a glance, and perceiving that no person had been hit, spontaneously embraced the Czar, and the Grand Dukes threw themselves into the arms of their father, covering his body as if to protect him. The indignant crowd shared the emotion of the sovereigns, and wished at once to lynch the assassin.

The news of the attempt spread rapidly, and the two Emperors again received a frantic ovation all along the route.

On that same evening, a grand ball was to take place at the Russian embassy, and the Czar insisted upon being present. When he entered the ball-room, with the Empress on his arm, he was the object of the most touching manifestations from all those present. He seemed a little irritated, but in the midst of this homage preserved a truly royal demeanour. The Empress, too, by his side, pressed close to him as if to protect her guest, her countenance being animated by the deepest emotion, and the diamonds which crowned her forehead were less brilliant than her eyes, still moist with tears.

M. Raimbeaux was present too, and was

the object of much attention; and he related the event to those around him with a modesty which would not allow him to acknowledge the providential part he had performed, in saving the life of the Emperor Alexander.

After the return of the Czar to Russia, Madame Raimbeaux received a rich present from the Empress Marie Federowna, as a grateful souvenir of the part her husband had played in this tragic circumstance.

The Czar was magnanimous enough to forget; and in 1870 he was the only one among all the monarchs of Europe who did not turn away from crushed and ruined France, and it was through his intervention that the armistice of September and the interview of Ferrières were granted. The sequel to these events is known! "Not an inch of our territory, not a stone of our fortresses!" was the answer of M. Jules Favre, and he proudly withdrew, when he might have come to terms at the cost of the outskirts of Strasburg, and an indemnity of three milliards.

France, then, displaying a useless heroism, went rolling towards the abyss, through mourning, ruin, and defeat.

In 1867, on the arrival of the King of Prussia in Paris, the Emperor himself went in state to the Northern Railway station to receive him. The Emperor had charged Admiral Jurien de la Gravière, one of the most amiable of the men about the Court, to pay especial attention to Mons. de Bismarck, in the hope that the charm of the Admiral's conversation might distract the First Minister's attention from certain disagreeable manifestations which there was some reason to fear might arise.

The carriage containing the two sovereigns was saluted with cries of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" The second, that of Marshal de Moltke, passed without impediment. But when the stalwart figure of M. de Bismarck was perceived in the third, dressed in the legendary uniform of the white cuirassiers, and his characteristic features surmounted by the spiked helmet,

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some hooting and hisses were heard. But M. de Bismarck had as much shrewdness as it was possible for any one to possess.

"I am very grateful to you, Admiral," he remarked to Admiral Jurien, who tried to distract his attention, "but I expected a reception of this sort, and I am not surprised at it. We public men cannot please everybody, and we must make the best we can of it."

After this, the conversation became easy. Indeed, those who then made the acquaintance of Count Bismarck retained of him the impression of a very courteous and agreeable man. He was of very gracious disposition, and his humour had that fine and delicate point about it known all over the world as French wit.

The King of Prussia was to lodge in the Pavillon de Marsan, at the Tuileries, and the carriages entered by the Cour du Carrousel. On passing under Trajan's Arch, the King said to the Emperor, "What fine things you have done since I was here!" This was with the Allies in 1817.

The Emperor returned the compliment: "The way in which your Majesty comes to-day is a much more happy circumstance for both the peoples."

And do not these two short sentences admirably depict the state of mind of each respectively?

The first excursion the King made in Paris was a visit to the Buttes-Chaumont. After taking a long look at the great city he said, taking up the sequence of his recollections, "I came here in 1814"; and as he proceeded, surrounded by his Prussian staff, he narrated to them, in German, the story of the entry of the Allies in 1814, and directed their attention to the various points which had been occupied by the Prussian troops.

King William interested himself particularly with the sanitary condition of the capital and the quality of the Seine water, and he expressed a wish to visit the great reservoirs.

The Prefect, Baron Haussmann, received him at Ménilmontant, and presented the

King with a golden goblet of water drawn from the spring. The King raised it to his lips, and those who accompanied him followed his example; these being the Count de Goltz, Ambassador in Paris, and his brother aide-de-camp to the King, Marshal de Moltke. The old marshal, however, who had perhaps drunk more conscientiously than the others, experienced some very disagreeable effects from it, and preserved, for many days, a not too pleasant recollection of the Paris water.

At a grand ball given at this time at the Tuileries, and during the cotillon which I myself led off, the roguish thought entered my mind to offer to Count Bismarck, who was in a corner watching the dancing, a bunch of roses, which was the signal for a waltz. M. de Bismarck was at that moment the object of general attention. He accepted the bouquet, and, yielding to my invitation, danced a long waltz with me, making his way very cleverly through the crowd of other dancers.

This little incident—so little in accordance with Count Bismarck's gravity and with the part he was already playing in the affairs of the world, afforded much amusement to the sovereigns and the others present, for they scarcely expected to see M. de Bismarck mixing with a crowd of youthful dancers.

In escorting me back to my place, he took an artificial rosebud from the lapel of his coat, and offering it to me, said, "Be pleased, madame, to preserve this as a souvenir of the last waltz I shall ever dance, and which I shall never forget."

# CHAPTER III.

Parliamentary Government — The Ministry of the 2nd January—M. Emile Ollivier and the Tuileries—Madame Emile Ollivier—Victor Noir—Prince Pierre Bonaparte—M. Henri Rochefort—Disturbances in Paris—Le Creusot—The Anarchists — Duel between Don Enrique de Bourbon and the Duke de Montpensier—Theatricals at the Prince Imperial's—Plebiscite sitting in the Salle des Etats at the Louvre—The Empress's toilette—M. Haussmann.

At the commencement of the year 1870, the Emperor made a radical change in the drift of his policy.

The Liberal ministry of the 2nd January, whose programme was a very extended application of the principle of parliamentary government, was hailed with lively enthusiasm. The funds went up, and the new path on which the Empire had resolutely entered met with general approval.

In summoning new men to the head of affairs, however, the Emperor had to leave on one side the old advisers whose experience had been so useful to him up to that time. Rouher, Baroche, Persigny, Drouin de Lhuys, Haussmann, all those men whose names had so long been connected with State affairs, were replaced by such men as Talhouët, Segris, Chevandier de Valdrôme, Louvet, Maurice Richard, and, lastly, by M. Emile Ollivier, who took the office of Keeper of the Seals and President of the Council. This was the ministry—modified in the following month of May by the retirement of M. de Talhouët, who was succeeded by the Duke de Gramont—the latter being in office when war was declared.

M. Emile Ollivier had been returned to the Chamber by the Department of the Seine at the elections of 1853, and together with M. Jules Favre (who had defended Orsini) and Messrs. Ernest Picard, Hénon, and Darimon, formed the first nucleus of opposition to the Empire. They were known by the name of "The Five"; but at the elections of 1865 the group of five became the group of forty-three, and it was still further augmented later on. The demands of those who called themselves the Liberals had already become blustering and clamorous.

Monsieur Emile Ollivier, by virtue of his talent, his upright character, and the influential position which he held in Parliament, was well marked out as the man to take the lead in the changes which every one appeared to long for.

Monsieur de Morny, too, with his keen and shrewd intellect, had some time before appraised the value of such an adversary as M. Emile Ollivier, and by many subtle means had sought to draw him nearer to power, and had insensibly enticed him upon new ground.

A journey which the Emperor made in Algeria (entrusting the regency to the Empress), afforded M. Emile Ollivier the opportunity of crossing the threshold of the Tuileries without calling forth too many protestations on the part of his friends.

The Empress had undertaken the task of abolishing the solitary confinement to which young prisoners were subjected, and of establishing in its place agricultural penitentiaries; and M. Emile Ollivier, who had given much attention to social questions, was called upon by the Empress to form one of the Committee entrusted with the drawing up of the bill. He supported the Empress's views, and the cell system for young culprits was abolished.

The Committee was composed of about forty members, and sat in the Tuileries in the presence of the Empress, and her Majesty had several private interviews with the Keeper of the Seals.

During one of these interviews a sudden and violent gust of wind shook the windows, and one of the large casements of the Empress's study flew open, allowing torrents of rain to enter the room. The Empress tried, but unsuccessfully, to shut the window; M. Emile Ollivier, however, came to her assistance, and both together they succeeded in closing it. "Let us hope, madame," said M. Ollivier, "that by our united efforts we may arrest the flood of human suffering, even as we have now mastered the elements."

On the 27th of June, after a sitting of the Committee on young prisoners, M. Emile Ollivier met the Emperor.

These were the steps by which M. Ollivier reached the presidency of the Council. Having lost his first wife, a daughter of the Marquise d'Agoust, he had just married quite a young lady, who looked on her position as the wife of a man who might some day become a great statesman in a very serious light, at the same time sincerely agreeing with all her husband's ideas. Luxury and elegance appeared to her to be in very little keeping with a democratic epoch, and she had the courage to inaugurate quite a new style of dress.

Although the etiquette of the Court required that the ladies should wear low-necked dresses in the evening, the first time she appeared at a grand official dinner at the Tuileries, Madame Ollivier went in a highnecked dress of white gauze, without either lace or jewellery, and with a few sprigs of natural heather negligently stuck into her handsome blonde hair; this simple costume suiting the freshness of her twenty years admirably, and rendering her appearance really charming.

Although Madame Emile Ollivier had no imitator, she did not the less continue to hide her shoulders and her arms and to discard all embellishments. She did the honours of the mansion in the Place Vendôme in the most pleasing fashion, and the air of gravity which she affected to put on blended to an admirable degree with the serenity of her frank and open countenance.

Madame Emile Ollivier had not a single frivolous taste, and she interested herself in the most serious questions; in fact, I remember how great was her surprise one day when I asked her if she skated. "I am too busy for that," she said.

It was about this time that M. Sardou's piece, "La Famille Benoîton," appeared, a

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refined and witty satire on woman's exaggerated taste for dress, amusement, and out-of-door life. The interesting and modest heroine of the piece offered a most striking contrast to the other lady characters, who were fond of show and glitter. She was called Sainte Rousseline. Madame Emile Ollivier played this same sympathetic part in real life.

At the advent of the Ollivier ministry, Baron Haussmann ceased to be Prefect of the Seine, and was replaced by M. Henri Chevreau. He had governed the city of Paris since 1853, and, wedded to his colossal task, M. Haussmann pressed towards his object without stopping at any obstacle, or, in fact, not taking them into account at all. Endowed with superior powers and administrative genius, it was he who actually brought about the transformation of Paris, aided to some extent by the Emperor himself.

After the revolution of 1848, problems of the greatest gravity arose. Public credit had to be restored, and work had to be found for that immense population of

Parisian electors, for whom the national workshops had created rights, without, however, providing them with resources.

M. Haussmann grappled with the difficulties of this situation in the neatest and cleverest way, and he undertook to endow France—who will count him among her most illustrious children—with what was to be practically a new capital.

Our great monuments, it is true, existed before him; but, like the skilful jeweller who sets the precious stones which he has deprived of their rough exteriors, so did he bring all our wonders to light.

The Louvre and Notre Dame, for instance, sprang up from the labyrinth of shapeless buildings among which they were buried. Fountains, plantations, quays, all the grand and pleasant *ensemble* of streets and gardens—it was he who planned them, cleared the way for them, embellished them. And it was all done promptly, without any hesitation, and without any necessity for remodelling the superb plan he had first conceived.

Baron Haussmann was as great when he left office as he had been when he filled it. He claimed the entire responsibility for what he did, and calumny neither affected him nor turned him from his task. Truly attached to the Emperor, he was a patriot before everything else, and possessed besides the high accomplishments and extended views of a statesman.

When the Empire fell, Baron Haussmann, who possessed only a modest fortune, accepted a position in an important financial company, and he is filling that position at the present day.

At the time when the Emperor was bringing about the liberal change of the 2nd January, which granted great independence to the Press, a fatal event occurred.

Prince Pierre Bonaparte, one of the sons of Prince Lucien, younger brother of Emperor Napoleon I., who was living a retired life in Paris, killed, at his own house, a young journalist named Victor Noir, who was connected with M. Rochefort's journal, *La Marseillaise.*

For about two months a furious quarrel had been proceeding amongst the Corsican papers, and Prince Pierre Bonaparte kept up a regular correspondence with some of his compatriots. Letters were sent to the Press and elicited insulting comments from the local journals. These were reproduced by the Paris papers. M. Rochefort seized this occasion for publishing some articles insulting to the Imperial family, speaking in disrespectful terms of the Empress and the Prince Imperial, and particularly aiming at Prince Pierre.

The Prince resolved to call M. Rochefort out, and sent Messieurs Paul de Cassagnac and De la Rocca to him with a challenge commencing thus: " Sir, having insulted all the members of my family one after another, without sparing either women or children, you now insult me through the pen of one of your underlings."

This letter incited M. Paschal Grousset, the author of the offending article, and who later on became a member of the Commune, to send his seconds to the Prince.

On the 10th of January, Victor Noir, accompanied by M. Ulrich de Fonvielle, repaired to No. 9, Rue d'Auteuil, the residence of Prince Pierre Bonaparte. The two young men, on being admitted, approached the Prince with a threatening aspect, and the interview immediately took a violent turn.

Victor Noir raised his stick and struck the Prince across the face, and at the same time M. de Fonvielle threatened him with a revolver.

Prince Pierre then drew his own revolver and fired at Victor Noir, the shot striking the latter full in the chest. Victor Noir was, however, able to stagger from the room and get to the street, while M. Ulrich de Fonvielle, taking cover behind a large arm-chair, fired several shots at the Prince; the Prince in return fired two shots at De Fonvielle, without, however, wounding him. In the meantime Victor Noir, struck to the heart as he was, managed to reach the door, and fell on the threshold at the feet of Paschal Grousset, who was awaiting in the street the result of the interview of his two friends with the Prince.

Victor Noir died without being able to utter a word.

The first thing Prince Pierre Bonaparte then did was to show his anxiety for justice by giving himself up at once a prisoner at the Conciergerie.

A serious disturbance was the sequel to this event. The party connected with the Opposition journals got possession of the corpse of the unfortunate young man, and gave him a public funeral.

As Victor Noir was of Parisian birth, and only twenty years old, this tragic end became the pretext for an extraordinary agitation.

In the course of two days, more than twenty thousand persons had passed in procession through the little student's room, situated on the fifth storey of a house at Neuilly, where the body was exposed to view; and on the morning of the 12th of January, in spite of the cold and the rain, more than a hundred thousand people made their way to Neuilly to follow the remains to the grave.

The procession had no sooner started than a violent dispute arose between the relatives of Victor Noir and the principal leaders of the demonstration. The latter insisted on passing through Paris and thus reach the cemetery of Père la Chaise, in spite of the orders of the authorities, who felt themselves bound to take measures to prevent a dangerous conflict.

At last it was decided that they should go to the Neuilly cemetery, and the vast multitude set itself in motion. The hearse was detached from the horses and dragged along by the people, and Victor Noir's brother, borne upon the shoulders of the populace, acted as chief mourner.

The revolutionary mob which rose up into notice in the notorious old days, and which had long been forgotten, gathered again that day around this funeral car; and it almost goes without saying that it was M. Rochefort's journal which had planned and arranged the demonstration.

Arrived at the cemetery, M. Gustave Flourens, M. Ulrich de Fonvielle, M. Marsteau, and M. Amouroux, all of whom were subsequently members of the Commune, made violent revolutionary speeches, and after the ceremony the crowd broke up and started back for Paris.

Near the Arc de Triomphe the scene was very animated. Monsieur Rochefort—very ill at ease, it was said, owing to the fear awakened within him by the popular emotion which he had aroused,—pale, gaunt, and nervous, hustled about and with difficulty keeping his feet—advanced in the midst of the crowd, who were shouting "La Marseillaise," cheering, and uttering seditious cries; and, carried away by excitement, bore everything down before them till, when opposite the Palais de l'Industrie, they came into collision with a regiment of hussars drawn across the roadway.

The first summons to disperse was announced by a roll of the drums. M. Rochefort, however, tried to parley, and urged his desire for order. He was only answered, however, by a second roll of the drums, when he turned and harangued the mob, beseeching them to be calm. The crowd at last, being obliged to open before the advance of the hussars in column, and by this movement cut in two, dispersed.

Meantime messengers had been despatched, at intervals, to the Tuileries, where the upshot of this grave disturbance was being awaited with anxiety.

The story goes that Marshal Canrobert, then Governor of Paris, when questioned as to the attitude the army would take in the event of a riot, answered with energy that the rioters would be shot down. To this severe reply of the Marshal's has been attributed the conduct of the Paris *mobiles* who, when assembled at the camp at Chalons at the outbreak of the war, made a demonstration against this valiant and honourable chief, the darling of his soldiers.

Prince Pierre Bonaparte, born in 1815,

was own nephew to the Emperor Napoleon I., and history records several events in the course of his career having dramatic endings. Living outside of the Court and the world, the history of the august family of which he was a member was the object of his passionate adoration.

In a letter which he wrote to the Duke d'Aumale at the end of a correspondence exchanged between Prince Napoleon and the Duke, and which nearly brought about a duel, he thus describes himself. Under the heading: "Reply of an old trooper to M. the Duke d'Aumale," Prince Pierre Bonaparte wrote:—"Although descended from a noble family, I am only a boor, a rude hunter of the mountains and forests which I have inhabited."

The Prince was tall and very corpulent, his features recalling those of the Bonapartes.

As a relative of the Emperor, and by virtue of the Constitution of 1852, he was outside the jurisdiction of the ordinary tribunals; a High Court of Justice being therefore constituted, the trial was begun at Tours on March 21, 1870.

The clamour aroused by this deplorable affair caused great mental anxiety to both the Emperor and Empress; and the rank of Prince Pierre of course imparted to the case a decided political stamp. A flood of journalism of a certain kind was unloosed, and in his paper M. Rochefort ranked the Bonapartes below the Neros and the Borgias, and expressed himself in such a way that it might have been supposed the Emperor was accustomed every morning to strangle a journalist as he would a fowl.

Monsieur Glandaz presided at the High Court, and Messieurs Clément Laurier and Floquet were charged with defending the interests of Monsieur and Madame Salmon, Victor Noir's parents, the young journalist having written under an assumed name.

Among the witnesses for the prosecution were Paschal Grousset, Flourens, Millière, and some other future members of the Commune.

There were, however, no eye-witnesse

of the scene, beyond those who figured in it; and Victor Noir being dead, Prince Pierre Bonaparte and M. Ulrich de Fonvielle were the only ones who could give evidence respecting it.

M. Ulrich de Fonvielle's revolver case and a sword-stick belonging to Victor Noir, which had been found in the Prince's drawing-room, were the only pieces of material evidence which had been secured.

Prince Pierre declared that, having been insulted and assaulted in his own house, he had only fired in legitimate self-defence; and two medical men had deposed, immediately after the occurrence, that his cheek bore evidence of his having been struck with great force.

M. Ulrich de Fonvielle maintained, on the contrary, that the Prince, after having said that he was ready to fight Monsieur Rochefort, but not one of his subordinates, flew into a passion, and thus became the aggressor; and thus the whole case hung upon these two different versions.

A number of witnesses agreed in testifying to the generous disposition of Prince Pierre, notwithstanding that he had a hot and violent temper.

In fact his whole life was subjected to close scrutiny; and it was recalled that he had stained his hands for the first time in Corsica in an affair of *vendetta*, and a second time in Greece, where he killed an Albanian while defending himself against brigands who had attacked him when out hunting.

On the other hand, acts were recounted of him which redounded to his honour. It was narrated, for instance, how on one occasion a *valet de chambre* to whom he was attached, was seized in the middle of the night with cholera. The Prince mounted his horse without waiting to saddle it, and set off to fetch a physician. At the first turn of the road, however, the horse shied and threw his rider, whose leg was broken in the fall.

The High Court threw out the charge of murder, and the Prince was acquitted. But he was nevertheless adjudged to pay the sum of 25,000 francs to Victor Noir's parents as damages, as well as the costs of the trial.

The sequel of this case was that Prince Pierre Bonaparte was induced to quit France, and wished to withdraw to England, where his elder brother, Prince Lucien, a man of learning and a refined and cultivated mind, had resided for many years. But when Prince Pierre confided his plan to his brother, Prince Lucien replied: "Do nothing of the kind, my dear brother; to live as an English subject is an expensive affair. Besides, if any misfortune happened to you here they would hang you, and this would unsettle my life entirely, because, as the brother of a hanged man, I should be expelled my club."

Monsieur Rochefort was in the meantime prosecuted for inciting to revolt, and the Deputy for the First Circumscription was convicted and condemned to six months' imprisonment and to pay a fine of 3,000 francs, but he was not deprived of his civil rights. He was incarcerated at Sainte-Pélagie, and was undergoing his sentence there when, on the 4th of September, the populace came to fetch him —to place him in the Government.

One result of M. Rochefort's condemnation was that a devoted woman who had associated herself with his life was cast with her children into absolute poverty, M. Rochefort, it appears, having no fortune at that time. The Empress heard of this cruel case, however, and gave the woman her generous assistance.

It was around the coffin of Victor Noir that were grouped those men who were destined to establish the Commune in May, 1871, under the Prussian guns; and that gloomy winter day was the prelude of disturbances which clouded the first months of 1870, and which left evil results till long afterwards.

On the 29th of January a formidable strike broke out at Le Creusot, the apparent reason of it being the discharge of a workman named Assy, one of the heads of the socialist-workmen's party, who had obtained employment at Le Creusot in order to stir up the happy and prosperous working population.

In this part of the country, once so wretched and secluded, the government of Monsieur Schneider, the President of the Chamber, twenty years previous, had created the finest ironworks in the world, and on the spot where the inhabitants formerly passed a miserable existence, subsisting on the meagre products of the soil, a flourishing town had risen, thus assuring the moral and material well-being of the workmen and their families.

Carried away by the teachings of the socialist, the Creusot workpeople went out on strike, clamouring for the reinstatement of their comrade Assy and the dismissal of their officers. Things got so serious, indeed, that troops were called in; but happily the strike ended without bloodshed.

Great leniency was shown under the new law towards public meetings, and in consequence of this the self-consciousness of the anarchists (the new name by which the revolutionists were known) increased in proportion—they began to calculate their own strength and importance; and at last a plot was hatched among them for the overthrow of social order and the assassination of the Emperor.

This conspiracy, however, was revealed by one Verdier. It was to have been carried out on the day of Victor Noir's funeral, but the energetic measures of precaution taken by the Government had disconcerted the conspirators' plans.

After this a working committee was formed, and arms, explosives, and money were procured. But the police got on the track of the plotters, and arrested several of them; among those captured being an anarchist named Mégy, who, at the moment of his arrest, shot an inspector of police with a revolver.

On the 27th of January a banquet took place at Saint-Mandé, where M. Félix Pyat proposed a toast in which, after vowing "hatred to the tyrant," he sang a song in praise of "The little bullet: the Liberator." On the same occasion, Flourens declared that the revolution was permanently established.

The anarchists now began to insinuate themselves into the barracks, and made attempts to enrol the soldiers; and one of them, addressing an officer on guard at the entrance to Prince Eugene's barracks, asked him: "Would you give the order to fire on the people if you were instructed to do so?"

"Sir," answered the officer, "I do not ask you what *you* would do in my place."

At these words the man drew a revolver and fired at the lieutenant, wounding him in the hand; and the latter, in spite of his wound, seized the aggressor, disarmed him, and took him to the guard-house.

On the same day a barricade was raised on the Boulevard du Temple. This was, however, soon carried by the troops, one man falling a victim to his temerity; for, placing himself on the top of the barricade, waving a red flag, and refusing to surrender, he was run through with a bayonet, crying, as he fell, "*Vive Rochefort!*"

Mobs had collected also in several other places, but a few charges of cavalry sufficed to disperse them.

A few days after this the Emperor and Empress went in an open carriage to Prince Eugene's barracks, and visited the soldiers' dormitories. I was in a second carriage. On our way we passed through populous neighbourhoods, only freshly opened up, and fringed with houses in course of construction. From all the scaffoldings, filled with workmen, came enthusiastic shouts of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" and the men, leaving their work, came down with the agility of sailors, and ran after the carriages. The Emperor gave orders to proceed at a walking pace, and thus we proceeded through dense crowds of joyful people cheering the Emperor with all their might; and yet these were the men who elected M. Rochefort.

Cries of alarm were now raised by a large portion of the Press, accusing the new constitution of fomenting disturbances in the country. Other journals accused the Government of organizing police outrages, and such inauspicious words as "plots," "assassination," "bombs," "explosive machines," &c., filled the public prints.

It was about this time, also, that the Duke de Montpensier killed Don Enrique de Bourbon in a duel; the victim being a chivalrous and kind-hearted prince, the cousin and close friend of Queen Isabella; and the event, which took place in the outskirts of Madrid, had the effect of quashing for ever the Duke de Montpensier's candidature for the throne of Spain.

At this time great uneasiness was beginning to be felt in Paris, ordinarily only occupied with business or enjoyment; and the effect of this could not fail to be felt at Court; the customary fêtes, indeed, became distasteful to the Empress, unceasingly preoccupied as she was by the dread of outrage and conspiracy. The grand official balls certainly came off as usual, but there were no fancy balls during the carnival.

In order to distract the mind of the Prince Imperial from these disturbing elements, he was authorized to invite a number of young friends to his apartments to witness the playing of a little theatrical piece which the Prince had amused himself by learning. It was the comedy of "La Grammaire" which had been chosen for the occasion, a well-known piece of Labiche; and on the 16th of March—the Prince's fourteenth birthday—the performance was given before a select audience of intimate friends. With the exception of a few persons with whom the Prince was on perfectly free and familiar terms—among whom was myself—only his own relatives and personal friends had been invited.

A real theatre had been erected for the purpose of this entertainment in one of the large drawing-rooms of the *Pavillon de Flore*, and the Prince and five of his young friends were the actors. There was only one female part, and that was taken by Louis Conneau, whose diminutive features and golden hair suited the character of a young girl admirably.

The Prince Imperial took the principal *rôle*—that of an old antiquary given up entirely to archæological research, and who saw Gallo-Roman remains everywhere. The Emperor, who himself was greatly interested in antiquarian subjects, laughed a great deal at the representation, and applied to his own case the errors into which a monomaniacal collector may be led. The Prince acted his part most charmingly, being quite correct in his movements and delivery, and with his young face made up to look the old *savant* to the life—whose dress, it may be noted, consisted of a long dark-red frock-coat with metal buttons, reaching down to his heels, nankeen breeches, quilted waistcoat, a huge cravat, and a grey wig.

The young people enjoyed themselves immensely, and the affair wound up with a supper, over which the Emperor presided, amusing himself with the children, and joining in their fun; the young Prince of the Asturias, son of Queen Isabella, being one of those present.

Shortly after this we entered upon the period of the plebiscite. The country, directly consulted, returned a vote of confidence in the Emperor, seven millions two hundred thousand individuals answering the sovereign's appeal with "Aye" against sixteen hundred thousand "Nays."

The vote was recorded on Sunday, May the 8th, and on the 9th and 10th some barricades were raised in the Belleville and Ménilmontant quarters, but they were as promptly removed.

On the 21st of the same month the great bodies of the State met in the new *Salle des Etats*, in the Louvre, and communicated to the Emperor the result of the plebiscite. The works for connecting this new hall with the Tuileries were not yet finished, and the Imperial *cortége* had to make its way through galleries encumbered with planks and building materials, hastily put on one side to permit of a passage through, along which a roll of carpet had been laid to cover the uneven floor. And as a result of this, the Empress's dress was caught up and torn by a piece of woodwork lying in the way, and this little disaster had to be repaired by pins borrowed from one and the other of those present. Her Majesty wore a dress of pale straw-coloured China crape, covered with white lace, and a small bonnet of the same material ornamented with feathers, on which sparkled a cluster of diamonds arranged in the form of an aigrette.

The weather was splendid, and more like that of the hottest part of July; and as an immense number of persons were present, the atmosphere was quite stifling.

The Emperor took his place on the throne, at the bottom of the hall, between the Empress and the Prince Imperial, the latter wearing for the first time the uniform of a lieutenant of the Grenadier Guards—the same, indeed, in which, two months later, he started for the war.

The ladies and gentlemen of their Majesties' households were drawn up on the platform, and the princes of the Imperial family and the ministers stood on the steps of the throne in the order of their rank. On the right were the members of the Senate, their President, M. Rouher, standing at their head; on the left were M. Schneider, President of the *Corps Législatif*, and the Deputies. For myself, being on duty that day, I was placed near the Empress's *fauteuil*, and in a good position to observe all that was going on.

The princesses and their suites were in the tribunes, and the galleries above were filled with showily-dressed ladies. Altogether the scene was a brilliant one.

The proceedings commenced by M. Schneider — accompanied by a deputation from the *Corps Législatif*—stepping forward and reading his address, afterwards handing to the Emperor the official report recording the result of the voting of the 8th of May. Having received this document, the Emperor placed it in the hands of M. Emile Ollivier. Then the Emperor, the Empress, and all present rose to their feet, and the

Emperor, in a firm, clear voice, which easily filled the vast hall, replied to M. Schneider's address. The speech was applauded and cheered throughout, but when the Emperor arrived at one passage in which, speaking of the liberal reforms he intended to introduce, he used this phrase: "Trusting in the wisdom of the French people," I noticed that M. Haussmann's broad attentive features put on a singular expression; advancing his chin with a certain pout of the lips, he shook his head, and seemed to express by his countenance that his confidence was not equal to that of his sovereign.

When the ceremony was over, their Majesties returned with the same retinue to their apartments in the Tuileries. And from the impression left on the minds of those who had been present at the ceremony, it certainly seemed as though the Empire rested on a firm and lasting basis.

# CHAPTER IV.

Rupture of the Negotiations—The Press—The Eight-hours' Ministerial Council—Convocation of the Chambers—Parliamentary Discussions—M. Thiers and the Duchess de Mouchy—The Emperor—M. Le Sourd—Colonel Stoffel—Proclamations by the Emperor—The Prince Imperial—The Military Laws—The Empress's Melancholy—The Mobilization—"La Marseillaise" by Order—M. Prévost-Paradol—The Count de Saint-Vallier.

THE King of Prussia having peremptorily refused the only guarantee required by the dignity and the interests of France, viz., the sanction of his royal authority to the definitive renunciation by the Prince of Hohenzollern of the throne of Spain, M. de Bismarck instructed all the Prussian ambassadors to officially inform the different European cabinets of the rupture that had occurred in the negotiations.

It was felt by the whole country to be an outrageous affront, and France, slumbering in the comforts of peace, was thrilled with a tremor of rage.

Journals of all shades of opinion approved of the energetic attitude of the Government. The *Univers* said: "In this circumstance our ministers have been the organs of public opinion," and all the papers held similar language.

M. Armand Guéroult wrote as follows in the *Opinion Nationale:* "Monsieur de Bismarck surpasses all bounds. If he wishes to preserve peace, let him go back; as for us, we cannot."

And M. Pessard, in the columns of the *Gaulois*, said: "For the first time since the 23rd of February, the ministry has spoken in language worthy of a French cabinet. If we had borne this last insult there is not a lady in the whole world who would have accepted the arm of a Frenchman."

This movement of the Press and of political centres was greatly accentuated by the aspect of Paris, where bands of people marched about the streets shouting for war; and referring to the attitude of the Paris populace, M. Thiers remarked: "It is more than enthusiasm; it is more than agitation; it is passion."

Lord Lyons, the British ambassador, at this moment addressed a despatch to Lord Granville, which is the testimony of an impartial witness of the then state of the popular mind. It was in these terms: "The excitement of the public and the irritation in the army were such that it became doubtful whether the Government would have been able to resist the demand for war, even if it could have announced some decided diplomatic victory. It was felt that as long as the Prussian article appeared in the evening journals, it would be very difficult to arrest the wrath of the nation; and it was generally considered that the Government would feel itself bound to quiet the public impatience by formally declaring its intention of seeking revenge for the conduct of Prussia" (Despatch No. 60).

On the 7th of July, M. Robert Mitchel wrote in the *Constitutionnel:* "If, as there is every reason to believe, the Spanish people spontaneously refuse the ruler whom it attempted to impose upon them, we should have nothing further to require at the hands of the Berlin cabinet."

This paragraph elicited next day the following reply from M. Léonce Détroyat: "We are not of the *Constitutionnel's* opinion; we think it would remain for France and Europe to demand some strictly binding guarantees from the cabinet of Berlin."

An article published by M. de Girardin, headed "A Congress or War," terminated with the following words: "Rather than compromise Monsieur de Bismarck's work, Prussia will refuse to fight; in that case we will drive her with the butt end of our rifles across the Rhine, and force her to evacuate the left bank!"

The indignation, in fact, was general, because hopes had been indulged in that the withdrawal of Prince Leopold would receive the valuable and lasting sanction of his sovereign, and the Government seemed to be inclined towards a peaceful solution of the affair. When the Emperor appeared in public, his carriage was surrounded, and angry cries of "War! war!" were raised on all hands.

As soon as Count Benedetti had reported the King of Prussia's decision, together with the objectionable proceeding of the Government which had accompanied the refusal of the royal sanction, the Council of Ministers met in Paris under the presidency of the Emperor.

The deliberations of the Council lasted eight hours, and its result was a declaration of war. During the sitting, the Emperor, as he always had done since the change in the constitution, loyally observed the absolute right of control attaching to his ministers, listening to each one's opinion, and hearing all they had to say.

When the Council broke up, the Emperor had an interview with Baron de Werther, the Prussian ambassador; and that same evening the Baron, who had been recalled by his Government, left Paris for Berlin.

The first duty of the Government was to take immediate steps to provide means for carrying on the war. For this the assent of the Chambers was necessary, and they were accordingly summoned without delay.

On the 15th of July M. Emile Ollivier asked the *Corps Législatif* for a credit of fifty million francs for the mobilization of the army.

This demand drew a protest from the opponents of the Imperial Government, which M. Thiers undertook to deliver from the tribune. This gentleman, appealing to the scruples of a conscience agitated by the fear of taking in the face of Europe the responsibility of an aggressive attitude, at the same time not leaving out of sight the wrongs we had suffered at the hands of Prussia, urged the Government to let King William assume the responsibility of the first blow.

But in using this language, M. Thiers was forgetting that several times a year, since the battle of Sadowa, he had uttered sad lamentations from the tribune on the abasement of France before the growing power of Prussia.

He insisted on the necessity of a waiting attitude, in order to obtain the mediation of the great Powers. But both Russia and England had already interposed in vain, Prussia having persistently repelled their conciliatory endeavours.

The Duke de Gramont replied to the speech of M. Thiers, and pointed out that if we had waited longer to invite the Powers to intervene afresh, we should have given Prussia time to complete her armaments, and attack us with greater advantage.

The discussion between the different political parties became excessively hot and violent, and insults and reproaches were bandied to and fro. At length, amid an indescribable tumult, M. Emile Ollivier replied to M. Thiers, and endeavoured to explain the attitude of the Government. He proceeded to say, in that harmonious and elegant flow of language for which he was famous: "We believe that useless wars are criminal wars, and if, with grief at our hearts, we have made up our minds for this war to which Prussia has challenged us, it is because there never was a war for which the necessity was more clear (great applause). During the eight hours of deliberation which we had yesterday, we had constantly in our minds what a grievous and painful thing it was in our age to give the signal for a sanguinary conflict between two civilized States. We have not considered whether the moment was or was not opportune for attacking Prussia; it was not our wish to attack either Prussia or Germany. We found we had to deal with an insult too great for us to bear, with a threat which, if we had allowed it to be carried out, would have brought us to the level of the most insignificant of States ('hear, hear; that's true'). A few weeks ago," continued M. Emile Ollivier, "Europe was happy and quiet. Who is it, then, who has suddenly raised this difficulty, so pregnant with storm and trouble? Is it us, or those whom you defend? (addressing himself to the extreme Left). Can we be said to have had the guilty fancy of putting the match to the gunpowder, and of then being astonished at the explosion which ensued?"

At this stage an incident occurred which is worthy of being recalled. Political passion has seized upon it in order to stigmatize the attitude of M. Emile Ollivier when war was declared: it was a word, a phrase, with which since then he has often been reproached, as being a token of his levity and inconsistency in the midst of such grave events. It is as follows, exactly as he pronounced it, and exactly as it was reported by the *Moniteur*:—

"Yes, a heavy responsibility for the ministers, my colleagues, and myself, commences from to-day. (From the Left: 'Yes, we accept it with a light heart!' and noisy protests.) Yes," continued M. Emile Ollivier, "with a light heart; and do not equivocate about the word; don't think I mean to say 'with joy,' for I have already told you of the grief the necessity for war has caused me. What I mean is: with a heart not deadened by remorse; with a self-reliant heart; because the war we are about to undertake we shall carry through; because we have done all that was humanly and honourably possible in our endeavours to avoid it; and lastly, because our cause is just, and is confided to the French army" (applause).

During the same sitting M. Jules Favre took up this expression of "a light heart," when M. Emile Ollivier interrupted him: "No equivocation, sir," he said; "I said *light heart*, because when one fulfils his duty he has not a troubled heart."

The expression undoubtedly aroused a deal of anger, but, in all fairness, it must be regarded as the metaphorical language of a man of letters. It never had, on the lips of him who pronounced it, the sense of gay heedlessness which has subsequently been attributed to it.

The credit asked for was unanimously voted by the Chamber, with the exception of ten votes from the Left, and the other proposals brought forward were agreed to without a single dissentient.

Next day the attitude of the extreme Left was severely commented upon by the Press. The *Opinion Nationale*, M. Adolphe Guéroult's ultra-Liberal journal, came out with the following lines on the 16th of July:—

"It must be said, whatever regret I may have in saying it, that yesterday the Left forgot itself. It has placed its spite and its fears before the national sentiment, and before the prudence which counselled it not to weaken the *élan* of the French. The words uttered by M. Arago will certainly, some day or other, weigh upon him and upon those who gave them their approval. *As for M. Thiers, it had been better for his memory if his career had come to a close before that day.*"

Nevertheless, from this time forward M. Thiers, whose authority seemed to grow in proportion with the misfortunes which overwhelmed us, lying in wait in every corner where the policy of attack was active, made it his business to stir up distrust and raise up misunderstandings. His attitude was one of marvellous dexterity all through this painful period.

Never did an ambitious statesman show greater cleverness; and if the strange tricks of politics could be looked at dispassionately amid the sorrows of the fatherland, it would indeed be a singular spectacle, this audacity of the old minister of Louis-Philippe, whose personality, looming up from twenty years back, appears again in all its entirety, and indeed more amplified, on the morrow of the revolution of the 4th of September.

The real point of departure of M. Thiers' conduct during the months of July and August, 1870, is very little known and forms a very interesting study.

On the 4th of July the Marquis de Massa, one of the Emperor's orderly officers, and who was related to and very intimate with M. Thiers, paid a visit to the Duchess de Mouchy, with whom he was acquainted; for he had been charged with a confidential mission to this lady.

M. Thiers, who had been tormented all his life with a thirst for power, and who, in his own eyes, was France itself incarnate, had found his longing for power wakening up afresh within him as soon as ministerial powers and prerogatives were extended. He wished, in fact, to join the Emperor's Government, deeming such a partnership in power worthy his time and attention. He had long before sought by cautious steps to open a way for himself, but whether he was not understood, or whether his co-operation was not desired, he had never been informed. Now, however, changing front, he charged a messenger with definite propositions, demanding with his usual impetuosity that matters should be accelerated, and that a prompt reply should be given him.

The Duchess de Mouchy required the reiterated assurances of the Marquis de Massa before she could bring herself to believe in the reality of this mission, which was, as the Marquis formally declared, to beg of the Duchess to be M. Thiers' intermediary with the Empress in offering his services to the Emperor.

Always very *au fait* with European policy, M. Thiers considered war with Prussia imminent and unavoidable. "The Emperor," he said, "will require to be surrounded with men of great experience. I have great authority in the Chamber, I have its entire confidence in questions of military organization, to which I have devoted a great deal of study, and my voice will be listened to sooner than any other. Tell the Emperor that *war with Prussia has been the dream of my life*, and that, under present circumstances, I place my devoted services at his disposal."

The Duchess understood at once the importance of such a step taken by a man of the stamp of M. Thiers, and, ordering her carriage immediately, she drove to Saint-Cloud, where the Empress was staying. She knew that the errand she came upon would cause the greatest astonishment, but her part was a very simple one, as all she had to do was to deliver the message.

GOVT GIRLS COLLEGE

On arriving at Saint-Cloud she was informed that the Empress had just gone to Paris, and was about to withdraw, when the Emperor, from his study window, noticed the arrival of the visitors. Recognizing the carriage as that of the Duchess de Mouchy, he sent to beg her to come in and see him.

The Emperor was on the point of going out, and proposed that the Duchess should accompany him in his walk, and while strolling up and down under the shady avenue of plane-trees in the garden the Duchess informed the Emperor of the object of her visit. His Majesty listened with the greatest attention, and then, still continuing his walk, he expatiated on the part M. Thiers had taken in politics all through his life.

"He has been called a great subverter," said the Emperor, "nevertheless he is a talented and a learned man, and I should have had no hesitation in calling him into the Cabinet if I had thought that his services would be useful to the country. But in entering on parliamentary government I have curtailed my prerogatives, and I have no longer the right to take any minister who may suit me: it is for Parliament to recommend them to my choice. Please to carry this answer to M. Thiers; he is an old parliamentary hand, and will understand me. Tell him I am profoundly touched by his offer, and that I thank him very much. *I know that I can count on the patriotism of the historian of the Consulate and of the Empire, whether in the ranks of the Opposition or in the Ministry.*"

The Duchess de Mouchy returned home after this interview, and, finding the Marquis de Massa was still there, she repeated to him with the most scrupulous exactitude the message entrusted to her by the Emperor for M. Thiers.

On the following day, the 5th of July, M. Thiers induced M. Cochery to make an interpellation from the tribune, in which he called upon the Government to make a statement as to the position of the Hohenzollern affair.

Now parliamentary debates are not compatible with diplomatic caution, the purport of every word having to be weighed; and to provoke a debate was to wave the brand of discord—at any rate, indiscreet utterances from the tribune or the Press could not but complicate the already difficult task of the Government.

M. Thiers, a clever and practised politician, might have understood this, and ought not to have directed his parliamentary spite against opponents entrusted with the destinies of the country in such delicate and critical circumstances. The interpellation was followed on the 15th of July by a speech from M. Thiers, in which he asked for the postponement of the war.

It is quite open to us to inquire what position M. Thiers would have taken up if the Emperor had entertained his proposal and made him a minister.

On the 12th of August, after the first disasters, M. Thiers declared from the tribune that he had constantly warned the Government of the inadequacy of our preparations.

But why did he not show his uneasiness on the 15th of July when war was declared? There was not a single minister, he said, who had not heard him passionately declare that we were not ready, and that the country had been deceived.

Why, then, if this was his conviction, did he not express it on the 15th of July? Why, on the 12th of August, did he give this valuable hint to the enemy, so little calculated to raise the spirits of the army?

And on the morrow of the 4th of September, when there was no army left, if M. Thiers had such a poor idea of our resources, why did he not use all his influence to obtain a cessation of hostilities, instead of promenading through Europe like the dove sent forth from the ark? It was not, alas! an olive-branch that he was bringing back to the bosom of his dying country.

Would to Heaven the gift of second sight and prophecy, of which M. Thiers boasted, had not abandoned him when he became head of the Government!

He would have spared us the Commune,

if on the eve of the 18th of March, in spite of prudent counsel, he had not treated the revolutionary manifestations of the Belleville people as child's play and refused to disarm the National Guard; and then we should not have seen the French guns turned against ourselves, and Paris threatened with ruin, and given over to murder, fire, and pillage.

The army, again, on its return from captivity, would not have had to win a cruel victory over an unfortunate populace exasperated by defeat and the sufferings caused by the siege, led astray as it was and hurried along into revolution by base and unscrupulous agitators. Unfortunately circumstances were, indeed, those under which the country was assailed both from outside and internally.

The declaration of war was notified at Berlin on the 18th of July by M. Le Sourd, first secretary of the French embassy. At the stroke of twelve, at noon, he read the diplomatic communication with the usual ceremony at the house of the President of the Council.

Colonel Stoffel was the first to feel the effects of the Prussian temper, which he describes as impetuous, arrogant, and void of generosity. The confidential officials at Berlin became aware of the military reports M. Stoffel had been sending home, and these marked him out for the ill-will of the Prussian ruler. He received a curt order on the 18th of July to quit Berlin, notwithstanding he had always been on a friendly footing with the Court, with Marshal Moltke, and M. de Bismarck; indeed he had been the guest of the latter in the privacy of his retreat at Varzin.

To the notice to quit was attached an intimation, on the part of Marshal Moltke and M. de Bismarck, that if Colonel Stoffel were found on Prussian soil on the following day, when the whole of the French embassy had to depart, he would be considered a prisoner of war and confined in a fortress. It was, indeed, a prompt ejectment.

For some days previous to this, however, the position of this officer in Berlin had already become critical. He was accused of having helped on the war; the populace followed him home, and watched outside his door armed with paving-stones to do him injury; and the police had to take measures for his safety on his journey to the railway station.

On the 20th of July the Duke de Gramont made the official announcement of the declaration of war in the Chambers, and on the 21st the Senate went in a body to Saint-Cloud to present to the Emperor the homage of its devotion.

M. Rouher made an impressive speech, in which he described the harmony which existed between the great bodies of the State and the Imperial policy, and spoke with enthusiasm of the victory which would follow our armies. But while he thus held forth, the Emperor was grave and anxious. "We are commencing a serious struggle," he said; "and France will require the co-operation of all her children."

Those who were present at this memorable interview—the last which took place between the sovereign and either of the great bodies of the State—have never forgotten the emotion and anguish betrayed again and again by the Empress's features as she listened to the words of the Emperor and M. Rouher.

Next day, the 22nd, the *Corps Législatif* was, in its turn, received, and in his reply to M. Schneider, the Emperor said: "I feel deep satisfaction, on the eve of my departure for the army, at being able to thank you for the patriotic support you have lent to my Government. A war is legitimate when it is waged with the consent of the country and the approbation of its representatives. You are quite right in recalling the words of Montesquieu, who said: 'The real author of a war is not he who declares it, but he who makes it necessary.' We have done everything in our power to avoid it, and the resolution we have taken has been dictated to us by the nation in its entirety. In taking my departure, I confide to you the Empress, who will call you around her should circumstances require it. She will know how to fulfil courageously the duties which her position imposes upon her."

These words of the Emperor were commented upon by the *Univers* (an Opposition journal) in the following terms: "This language overshadows and consigns to oblivion the sorry speeches delivered in the *Corps Législatif*, and Europe will comprehend its lofty significance. If the Emperor's words are placed side by side with the demonstrations which are being made on all sides, it will be seen that, as regards France, the war on which we are about to enter is neither the work of a party nor an adventure forced on by the sovereign. The whole nation devotes itself to it, heartily and entirely, and the truth of this will be recognized in spite of the brawlings and objections of a few deputies."

The proclamation of the Emperor announcing to the country that war had been declared, and enumerating our grievances against Prussia, concluded as follows:—

"Frenchmen! there are solemn moments in the life of peoples when the national honour, violently excited, obtrudes itself with irresistible force, dominates everything, and takes into its own hands the management of the country's affairs. Prussia—towards whom, since the war of 1866, we have shown a most conciliatory disposition—has taken no account either of our good-will or of our forbearance. Launched upon a career of encroachment, she has awakened distrust on all sides, rendered increased armaments necessary, and turned Europe into a camp in which reigns a dread and uncertainty of what the morrow may bring forth. A recent incident has shown the instability of international relations, and exposed the gravity of the situation. We have had occasion to protest against the new pretensions of Prussia, but our protests have been evaded and followed up by contemptuous acts, causing acute irritation throughout the country. A cry for war was immediately raised, and echoed from one end of France to the other, and now it only remains for us to confide our destiny to the chances of battle. We do not make war upon Germany, whose independence we respect. It is our wish that the peoples which compose the great Germanic nationality should freely dispose of their own destinies. As for ourselves, we demand that a state of things shall be set up which shall guarantee our security, and make the future sure. We want to obtain a durable peace based upon the real interests of the peoples, and to put an end to this precarious situation in which all the nations are using their resources in arming themselves one against the other. The glorious flag which we unfold once more in the face of those who are provoking us, is the same which carried across Europe the civilizing ideas of our great revolution. It represents the same principles, and will inspire the same devotion.

"Frenchmen! I am putting myself at the head of this valiant army, which is animated by the love of duty and of the Mother Country. It knows its own value, for it has seen victory follow in its footsteps in all four quarters of the globe. I take my son with me, in spite of his tender age. He is aware of the duties which his name imposes upon him, and is proud to share in the dangers of those who are fighting for their country. May God bless our efforts! A great people defending a just cause is invincible!"

The Prince Imperial's joy knew no bounds when he learnt that he was to follow his father to the war. He was then only fourteen years old!—the age of youth, when young imaginations are excited by stories of brave achievements; and there was already the flash in the Prince's big blue eyes which marks the future hero. Young Louis Conneau, the Prince Imperial's playfellow and schoolmate, asked to be allowed to accompany him. To this request, however, the Emperor replied: "My son is not going with the army to play at soldiers, but to learn his business as a sovereign."

Would that Louis Conneau had been with the Prince ten years later at that sanguinary scene in Zululand! A friendly hand to catch the bridle of the frightened horse, which bolted at the sudden apparition of the dark-skinned warriors on the banks of the river Ityotiozi, would have sufficed to save the life of the Prince Imperial, left alone among the Zulus who massacred him.

In the meantime war preparations were pushed forward with energy on the other side of the Rhine. The Prussian nation had for a long course of years been undergoing a military education which gave it a mighty impetus; while with us, each one gauged events by the measure of his own temper and his own interests, without properly analyzing the subject-matter. The clash of arms is pleasing to the sons of Gauls and valiant knights, and all the women of our race have in their veins some drops of the old Gallic blood which has engendered so many heroes.

From its very outset the war of 1870 was popular. France had faith in her own good fortune, and in that army which had known no reverse for eighteen years.

Nevertheless, at the very commencement of the Hohenzollern dispute—which will always be linked with the most painful recollections of our history, which laid France in ruins, and left so many rankling wounds in French hearts—two distinct currents of public opinion were set going.

One of these parties was in favour of war, being desirous of upholding the national dignity, and of seeing the end of that burdensome peace which kept the whole power of the nations invested in their armies, in the expectation of an imminent war. These people put their trust in the Emperor's patriotic wisdom, and in the confident speeches made from the tribune by those whom they deemed should know best, in reference to the condition of our armaments.

On the 9th of April, 1869, Marshal Niel, addressing the Senate, made use of the following language: "Our situation is such that by maintaining our armaments on their normal peace footing, and with the present organization of our military system initiated by the Emperor, we can never be taken by surprise. For this also we have to thank the abundance of our supplies, which I regard as a sacred trust not to be touched except in time of war; and for this, further, we have to thank our reserve forces, which are on a most complete footing."

Again, on the 12th of April, 1869, Marshal Niel thus delivered himself: "To-day, it is all the same to the Minister of War whether we are at peace or at war; he is always ready."

Grave protests arose in political circles among the opponents of the Government, and also, for different reasons, among those whose welfare was closely linked with the Empire. The democratic origin of the Imperial Government permitted of no illusion being entertained about the consequences of an unsuccessful war. The defeat of France meant the fall of the dynasty; and this was the light in which the situation was viewed by the Emperor, as well as by the Empress, although the influence of the latter on the Emperor's decisions at this time has been judged with extreme harshness. Indeed there are those who dare to assert that at the moment of entering upon the campaign the Empress made use of the following expression: "It is my war!" but this is nothing but a ridiculous phrase invented by some scribbler in want of something to write about. The real truth is that the Empress had, on the contrary, a great horror of war.

At the close of the eight-hours' sitting of the Council, at which the fate of the country was decided, the Empress, in her anxiety, went to M. de Parieu, President of the Council of State, and asked him what he thought of the resolutions taken. M. de Parieu, who was highly esteemed by the Emperor and Empress, and a just and upright man, replied: "I think, Madame, that if England could have devised some formula by which we might have escaped war, she would have deserved much at the hands of France."

"That is my opinion," answered the Empress, in a serious tone.

On the evening of the day when war was declared, while Paris was delivered up to noisy demonstrations, the Empress was taking a silent walk in the park of Saint-Cloud, looking upon the blazing illuminations of the great city in the distance. She was profoundly absorbed, and Madame de Saulcy, one of the ladies of honour in attendance, was struck with the Empress's melancholy, contrasting so sharply with the lively bustle of the day, in which so much had been done, and so many people had been seen. Indeed, the Baron de Vareigne, prefect of the palace, who accompanied the Empress in her walk, could not help noticing and alluding to it.

"How can you expect me to be free from anxiety," replied the Empress, "when I think of what is about to happen? Here is a great country like France, peaceable and prosperous, engaged in a struggle which, whatever its result, will heap up ruin and multiply bereavements. The honour of France is at stake, but what disasters will accrue if fortune goes against us! *We have but one card to play:* if we are not victorious, France will not only be dismembered and burdened with a heavy ransom, but will be swallowed up by the most frightful revolution that has ever been witnessed."

The Empress was informed of the secret plots of certain of the enemies of the Empire—those whom later on, after the riots at La Villette, and the massacre of the firemen, she justly named the fourth army of Bismarck; and in fact she already foresaw the part they would be called upon to play on the first sign of disaster.

During the greater part of the year, ever since my marriage, I had lived at the Château de Nogent, situated in the Department of the Aisne, near the old Château de Coucy. Monsieur Carette had a large farm there, and I seldom visited Paris when not in attendance on the Empress.

The Aisne being a department abutting on the frontier, no sooner had the decree for mobilization gone forth, calling up the men of the reserve, the Garde Mobile, and the territorial army, than we found ourselves in the midst of active military movements.

An appeal to the patriotism of the nation was promulgated with this decree, calling for the enlistment of volunteers for the duration of the war, and a numerous contingent was raised from all classes of society. Large numbers of young men, accustomed to be looked upon as fashionable nonentities, went off full of enthusiasm, and through the whole of that rough campaign gave the highest examples of courage, self-denial, and military aptitude.

It was about this time, at the beginning of the mobilization, that I received my first vivid impression of warfare. There was a number of saddle-horses kept upon the farm; these were requisitioned for the use of the army, and soldiers sent to fetch them. The tramp of these horses as they were led away down the quiet country road, and the troop of uniformed riders, gave shape to the ideas of strife and combat which floated in my imagination. From that moment my notions of warfare assumed a definite form, and I realized the fact that the fate of the nation would be sealed as soon as these small isolated groups should be united and form a compact army.

From this time forward, soldiers on leave were constantly passing to and fro, as well as men of the reserve on their way to Laon, where the concentration was going on, and to which point they were directed from the various corps. They all appeared very determined, and as they passed through the country they met with a sympathetic reception everywhere.

At Laon, however, the careless conduct of the authorities only barely escaped being the cause of serious disturbances. No preparations had been made for the reception and accommodation of this crowd of men arriving from all points of the Department; and, finding neither encampment nor lodgings had been prepared for them, and for the most part tired out by their long journey, they took refuge in the public-houses, where they spent their little stock of money in drink, and then in their excited state they became difficult to manage.

On the 28th of July a kind of riot, in which seditious cries were raised, broke out at Laon, and it was only with some difficulty that the Préfect, M. Ferrand, and General Thérémin d'Asme, who commanded the fortress, succeeded in quieting the men and getting them to the railway station, a band of music at their head.

The prevailing idea at the opening of the campaign was, that after a few engagements on the frontier we should force the Prussian lines, and then, the public cry of "To Berlin!" becoming a reality, that our victorious troops would again cover the ground previously trodden by our ancestors to Jena, Auerstadt, Magdebourg, and Berlin.

It was to the cry of "To Berlin!" that the first troops of the line left Paris on the 20th of July amid the cheers of the multitude. It was to this cry that our African regiments embarked to join the army. It was this cry which moved the élite of society to meet together at the Opera, as to a grand fête, on the 22nd of July. It had been announced that the Emperor would be there, at the representation of "La Muette de Portici," and that Madame Marie Sass would sing the "Marseillaise." The stigma of revolutionary reminiscences attaching to this song was effaced by the patriotic enthusiasm which hurried us away to the frontier; and besides, it was "by order" that the ".Marseillaise" was given.

On the 18th of July the Emperor gave a dinner at Saint-Cloud to the officers of the Voltigeurs de la Garde about to start for the front. They were numerous, young, and full of martial ardour. The dinner took place in the Apollon Gallery, one of the most handsome halls the Imperial palaces boasted, and its elegant architecture and decorations, its splendid pictures, its compartment ceiling of gilded work, together with the flashing lights and the bright uniforms, formed a most brilliant scene. Towards the end of the dinner the Emperor gave an order in a low tone, and immediately the military band, which had played selections during the evening, struck up the "Marseillaise." The Emperor had comprehended that the burden of this ancient song which accompanied our fathers in their victories would send a patriotic thrill through all those officers gathered around him. In fact, as soon as the first few bars of the tune had been played, all present rose spontaneously to their feet, and with head erect and arm extended, struck their glasses, and with the strains of music mingled enthusiastic cries of "Vive l'Empereur! Vive la France! A Berlin!" Those who returned are easily counted, as most of them fell upon the field of battle! Their memory hovers over the remains of the ruined palace.

Neither the Emperor nor the Empress went to the gala performance at the Opera, but all the fashionable and distinguished personages then in Paris did not fail to honour the occasion with their presence. When Madame Sass appeared on the stage in her best dramatic attitude, dressed in a white tunic and long cloak figured with bees, and holding in her hand a tricoloured flag, ringing applause burst from all parts of the house, and it was in the midst of indescribable emotion that she uttered the first few notes of her song. The Duchess de Mouchy rose to her feet; she had put on that day, by a lucky chance, a white dress trimmed with red bows, and for a head-dress she wore a wreath of bluebells. The entire audience then rose from their seats, and a single voice was heard from one of the stalls. It was that of M. Emile de Girardin, and the whole house joined in the chorus, the song finishing up with cries a thousand times repeated of "Vive la France! A Berlin! Vive l'Empereur!"

These last holiday cheers must have long retained their echo in the heart of a sovereign so popular and so really beloved, and it was a far cry indeed from this "Marseillaise," taken in the sense that it then was, to the sinister meaning given to it by the drunken populace in the first days of the riots. The thought of seeing the foreigner cross the threshold of the country was very far from us on that day!

At this moment all events outside the preoccupations of the war passed off unnoticed, but nevertheless the death of M. Prévost-Paradol, our minister at Washington, caused a great sensation. A forcible and brilliant public writer, he had led off in the *Journal des Débats* with a campaign in the ranks of the Opposition, and the flexibility of his style and the degree of his talent entitled him to be compared with the writers of the eighteenth century. He was a rival of M. Emile Ollivier, and he often met Prince Napoleon in the *salon* of Madame la Marquise d'Agout, one of those retreats where the Opposition for so long a time found an agreeable asylum. It was at this time that he was launching the arrows of his bitterest irony against the power which one day he was to be called upon to serve.

In 1868, when his book *La France Nouvelle* appeared, M. Prévost - Paradol sent one of his friends with a copy to the Emperor, and an assurance that no personal attack was contained in it. "I am an enemy of the system," he said, "not of the dynasty." The Emperor received the indirect homage with a smile.

Later on, after the 2nd of January, M. Prévost-Paradol sought the assistance of the new Ministers, among whom were several of his friends, to enable him to enter upon a diplomatic career. He was, in fact, tired of journalistic strife, and wished to attach himself to something more solid and durable. The Emperor assented to the proposal, but it was not immediately put into execution, and M. Prévost-Paradol, not seeing his nomination appear, imagined the Emperor had altered his mind. He confided his suspicions to a friend, who spoke to the Emperor on the subject, and the Emperor confessed that several Ministers were opposed to his nomination, more particularly Count Daru. "These gentlemen," said the Emperor, "assert that Prévost-Paradol is still writing against me in the *Times*, of which he is the correspondent. But the step you have taken seems to me a sufficient reply to that. I don't believe he is capable of playing a double part. Tell him he is appointed."

His old friends thereupon heaped reproaches upon him, some of them even not stopping at insult, and being of a nervous and melancholy temperament, he went to Washington in great distress of mind.

M. Prévost-Paradol, a fashionable and discreet doctrinaire, was a fine specimen of a particular set of men who fought against the Empire, almost to their own regret. His opposition was courteous to a certain extent, and in the main he sympathized with the Emperor, and was ready to side with him. On hearing, at his new post, of the declaration of war, he was seized with patriotic grief; he lost his head entirely, and put a pistol-bullet through his heart.

The news of this suicide had a painful effect in France. It was just one of those tragic occurrences which seem to accompany great public disasters with their sinister forebodings. M. Prévost-Paradol left behind him a son and a daughter, and the daughter, who was then only a child, took the veil a few years ago among the Carmelites.

During the summer months the Dames du Palais took longer spells of duty, lasting, in fact, a month, in order to avoid the frequent long journeys which a shorter period of service would entail, the Court being then alternately at Fontainebleau and Biarritz. I had left the Empress at Saint-Cloud towards the middle of July, and was to go on duty again with Madame de la Poëze on the 4th of September. Knowing, however, that the Empress was a prey to care and anxiety, I lived in a state of constant uneasiness, and passed my time in going to and fro to see her and to keep myself posted up in events. On one of these journeys from Nogent I happened to fall in with Count de Saint-Vallier, our Minister at Stuttgard. He was returning to France, like the other diplomats accredited to the different German Courts. The impressions he was bringing from

Stuttgard were of great interest, the King of Wurtemberg being one of the most influential princes belonging to the Germanic Confederation. Further than this, he had always been on excellent terms with the Imperial family, with which he was connected through Princess Catherine, mother of Prince Napoleon and Princess Mathilde.

M. de Saint-Vallier had commenced his career under the auspices of M. Drouin de Lhuys, and he was subsequently attached to the Cabinet of M. Rouher, then Minister of State. A great intimacy had indeed sprung up between M. Rouher's family and the young diplomat's mother, the Marquise de Saint-Vallier, and this lady was a constant guest at Madame Rouher's five o'clock tea. M. de Saint-Vallier's tact and talents soon came to be appreciated, and he was appointed Minister at Stuttgard in 1868. On his way back to France he was now making a stay at Coucy-les-Eppes, the family mansion near Laon, before proceeding to Paris to render an account of the latest events connected with his mission.

I was obliged to pass round the Soissons station, that of Chauny, which I generally used, being blocked by troops on their way to the frontier; but on arriving at the former place I found a similar state of things, and had to wait there several hours. It was there I met M. de Saint-Vallier, who, like me, was on his way to Paris, and we dined together in the station buffet; endless trains of troops, cattle, and stores of all kinds for the use of the army following each other the while almost without interval along the line.

I used frequently to meet M. de Saint-Vallier at Court; every year he came to Compiègne, to Fontainebleau, to Paris, and was present at all the fêtes. He was a man extremely correct in dress and deportment, very reserved but at the same time an agreeable talker, with a serious look, and continually occupied with the business of the service. His health, however, was not good, and this circumstance protected him from the allurements of pleasure. Moreover, he moved in the best society, and was much in request at foreign Courts, where he wore that air of diplomatic discretion calculated to sharpen the curiosity of the *salons* where politics are mixed up with the refinements of familiar gossip.

"You are going to see the Empress," he said to me. "You can convey to her the formal assurance that there will be an alliance of all Southern Germany against Prussia at our very first success. This alliance cannot be declared immediately, but it exists in a latent state in the minds of the Princes of the Germanic Confederation. The smaller States regard the domineering disposition of the Hohenzollerns with uneasiness. They feel that Prussia, if victorious, will absorb them in their turn, and both the peoples and the sovereigns have a wholesome dread of that domination. They are only awaiting a single reverse to turn against Prussia and join us."

M. de Saint-Vallier had always reported

in this sense to his Government, but in using such language how great was his error! Was he blinded by hopeful illusions? or had he allowed himself to be deceived by empty protestations? The very moment war was declared the whole of the Germanic Confederation responded to the Prussian King's appeal, merged their armies with his, and swooped down upon us to establish the German Empire.

After all was over, M. de Saint-Vallier, in his endeavour to redeem his diplomatic responsibility, gave the lie, which became so famous, to the Duke de Gramont, who, to set himself right after the war, was quite justified in recalling the pacific assurances transmitted to him by his agents in Germany. The official despatches proved that the first version of M. de Saint-Vallier—that which he had confided to me—was the correct one.

# CHAPTER V.

**The Bridge of Kehl—The Regency—Departure of the Emperor and Prince Imperial for the Army—The Emperor's health—The Baron Larrey—The Camp at Châlons—Journey to Arenenberg—Monsieur Bâchon—Stay at Compiègne—The Empress at Wilhelmshohe—Metz — Saarbrück — Wissembourg—Death of General Douai — Reichshoffen — Forbach — Marshal Bazaine's Wife—Invasion.**

THE Session closed on the 23rd of July, after the credits had been voted; but the Deputies, with the exception of those whose departments were near the theatre of war, remained for the most part in Paris. On the same day the Baden troops hauled the bridge of boats which crossed the Rhine over to the German side, thus severing the last link which united the two peoples, a sign of more violent tearings-asunder to come.

On the 26th of July a decree was issued constituting the Government of the Regency, and investing the Empress with power from the day when the Emperor should have left the capital. The members of the Privy Council, with the ministers and other important personages, formed the Council of Regency. They were: Marshal Baraguay-d'Hilliers, recently appointed Governor of Paris, replacing Marshal Canrobert, called to command the army of Châlons; M. Baroche; M. Drouin de Lhuys; M. Magne; the Duke de Persigny; M. Rouher, President of the Senate; and M. Schneider, President of the *Corps Législatif*.

On the 28th of July, the Emperor, accompanied by the Prince Imperial, started to join the army. In a retired part of the park of Saint-Cloud a level passage had been cut and a small platform provided, enabling the Imperial family to join the railway without first going to Paris, and an open thatched shelter with a few lamp-posts served for a waiting-room. At an early hour of the morning there was a lively bustle in the palace: officers in full uniform, forming part of the Emperor's military retinue, mingling with ministers and those attached to the Court waiting to salute the Emperor on his departure, and while the great palace-yard was filling with brakes and omnibuses for the use of the people in attendance, light, uncovered *vis-à-vis* park-vehicles were driven into the private gardens.

Soon the Emperor, accompanied by the Empress and Prince Imperial, issued from the Empress's private apartments, and passing through the long suite of rooms, directed his steps towards the park entrance, shaking hands with and addressing kind and affectionate words to those he met on his way. The Emperor had on the undress uniform of a General of Division. The Prince Imperial had put off the woollen galoons of a corporal of the 1st Grenadier Guards, and had donned the uniform of a sub-lieutenant. He had the frank and open countenance and the fresh complexion of a child, with a grace and elegance rare at that age; and he was very proud of his sabre, slapping it as it hung against his side, and grasping it with a determined air. He kept by the side of the Empress, holding her hand affectionately, and looking at her with eyes reddening with the tears which he did his best to restrain; for, although of an ardent and energetic nature and full of spirits, he was as tender, affectionate, and gentle as it was possible a child could be.

"A soldier ought not to cry," he thought. And a soldier he was already to the bottom of his soul, like those young gentlemen the Condés, the Gramonts, the d'Assas, who got their military schooling on battle-fields, and who from the cradle had learnt to love their country as they loved their mother. The Empress was in that state of mind which all women, all mothers, have experienced who have had to undergo the agony of a long separation. She was trembling with emotion, but contained herself like a sovereign. Passing out of the Vernet *salon* they entered a carriage at the end of the terrace, and instantly the other vehicles were filled, and followed that of the Emperor, while a certain number of persons, who had been unable to secure a place, started off on foot for the little station, where the Imperial train was drawn up alongside the platform.

The sky was dark and lowering. Having descended from the carriage, the Emperor, Empress, and Prince Imperial waited in the pavilion for their attendants, who pressed round them for the last time. The Emperor, at this moment, approached M. Emile Ollivier and shook hands with him, saying at the same time, "I count upon you," and then entered the train, accompanied by his staff.

I was personally acquainted with all those generals, some of whom were destined to command. They were Generals Bourbaki, Frossard, Douai, Pajol, Lebrun, Favé, de Failly, Vaubert de Genlis, Reille, Lepic, Prince de la Moskova, Castelnau, and lastly Marshal Lebœuf. They had all been marked out for Imperial favour by their brilliant services, and on the battle-fields of the Crimea, of Italy, of Mexico, of China, they had all of them nobly sustained the honour of the flag. They were all filled with an ardent love for their country, and were passionately devoted to the army, and there were good grounds for counting upon their valour and military attainments.

Marshal Lebœuf left the Ministry of War in the hands of General Decaen—who afterwards replaced him—while he exercised his functions of Major-General of the army. The Marshal had made his career in the artillery, and in Italy he had proved himself to be one of our best Generals. He had the heart of a lion, coupled with a kindness of disposition, benevolence, and generosity which secured the veneration of all those who came near him. He was loyal and brave, too, and true as steel, and one of the most handsome and brilliant officers of the French army. Above all, however, he adored France, and he was one of those most severely crushed by the bitterness of our overwhelming misfortunes. On the day of the Emperor's funeral at Chislehurst I saw him convulsed with sobs, bathing his old master's coffin with his tears. What reminiscences of the past, what thoughts, what dreams, were passing at that moment through his mind! His whole being seemed swallowed up in grief, and he retired to his family estate, surrounded by his own people, his only object in life being to do all the good in his power, and died at last disconsolate.

While the Generals were entering the carriages the Emperor looked upon his brilliant staff, remarking with a smile to the Empress that they formed a regular *corps d'armée* of themselves. Meanwhile the train was ready, and after one last embrace the Empress came down upon the platform. Her husband and her son are going to meet danger face to face, while she remains at home burdened with the crushing weight of power and responsibility. The Emperor makes a last sign to those witnessing his departure, and then, perceiving one of his chamberlains amongst this crowd of friends, he calls to him with a firm and stout voice: "Dumanoir, I did not wish you good-bye!" These are his last words at Saint-Cloud, uttered amidst the general emotion, for all eyes are wet with tears. These words are succeeded by a moment of solemn silence, then the signal is given and the whistle sounds, and the Empress, directing a look of passionate tenderness to her son, exclaims, "Do your duty, Louis!" All present then uncover, and the train gets into motion amid deafening cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" The Emperor is leaning with his elbows upon the balustrade of the carriage, gazing upon the Empress with an indefinable expression of nobleness, tenderness, and encouragement. She stretches out her hand towards those whom fate is hurrying from her, and this same sweet look of the Emperor remains persistently fixed upon her until the moment when the train, arrived at the boundary of the park, joins the main line. At this spot the Emperor crosses to the other side of the carriage to salute the people gathered there, who are greeting him with frantic cheering, and then the train passes round a gentle curve and disappears.

On regaining her carriage the Empress broke down completely. Had the future been unveiled before her eyes?

It appears that the Emperor's health was very much impaired at the very opening of the campaign, but I do not know that any one had suspicion then of the seriousness of his condition. However, on the 2nd of July, 1870, a consultation of physicians and surgeons had been held; they were the Doctors Ricord, Fauvel, G. Sée, Nélaton, and Corvisart. It is a most inconceivable mystery, but five eminent physicians, met together to examine the Emperor, drew up a written opinion signed by Dr. Germain Sée alone, and this opinion was never communicated to any of those who could have had an interest in learning it. After the Emperor's death, however, in 1873, it was found hidden among his papers.

During the time when I had the honour of being retained in the close vicinity of the Empress, in 1864, those in attendance on the Emperor had been accustomed to see him habitually engaged in sedentary pursuits; and in the summer, during the stay at Saint-Cloud, Compiègne, or Fontainebleau, the Empress, being persuaded that these sedentary habits were hurtful to the Emperor's health, did all she could to induce him to go out walking for at least an hour at a time. Then they would pass slowly along the lovely walks and grand avenues, and after proceeding for two or three kilomètres would return. Or else, taking the arm of one of his aides-de-camp, or of one of his officers, or of some visitor, the Emperor would walk and talk, but never go a long distance; but he rather seemed to submit himself to this in order to please those around him. He was one of the cleverest horsemen in Europe, but when on foot he had the gait of a dismounted cavalier. He walked with a careless step, leaning upon his gold-knobbed cane of rhinoceros-horn, whose handle was the finely-carved head of an eagle. It was a present from the Duchess de Cambacérès. He was a very good shot, and had always been fond of hunting, and I have known him pass days in hunting on foot without showing the slightest fatigue. I suppose it was with him as with other persons of an impressionable nature, what he found pleasure in doing appeared to him to be easy. The Emperor rarely went out walking when the Court was at Paris; and when he did it was generally a short promenade on the private terrace of the Tuileries, along by the fountains.

In 1865 the Emperor quitted Fontainebleau to drink the waters at Plombières; he passed the season there, and on the 15th of August went to the camp at Châlons to pay a visit to the troops. Here the Empress was to join him. It had been arranged that their Majesties should make an excursion, nearly incognito, to Arenenberg, on the borders of the Lake of Constance, which had not been visited by the Emperor since the death of Queen Hortense, his mother, whose memory he cherished tenderly. It was at this time that the first symptoms of the Emperor's malady appeared, and the first person to whom he unbosomed himself was the Baron Larrey, chief physician of the army.

Before the arrival of the Empress at Châlons, Baron Larrey was much surprised one morning about seven o'clock at seeing Léon, the Emperor's old *valet de chambre*, coming himself to fetch him. Notwithstanding the earliness of the hour, Baron Larrey was ready, and he went immediately to the Emperor, whom he found in bed and somewhat feverish.

"I have passed a very painful night, my dear Larrey," said the Emperor; and on the Baron expressing his regret that he had not been called sooner, the Emperor in his usual kind way replied that he had been unwilling to disturb his rest. Then he told the Baron how he suffered, and described the symptoms of his malady; in fact, this new attack had caused him some alarm.

Dr. Larrey soon satisfied himself as to the nature of the disease which was declaring itself, advised the Emperor to take the greatest care, and said, in his opinion, an immediate operation was necessary. Now the Emperor had but little faith in medicine, and above all he had a horror of surgical operations; he therefore did not accept the doctor's advice. "We will talk about it by and by," he said, and ordered the Baron not to reveal to any person what he had just confided to him. "I particularly beg of you," he added, "not to say a word about it, especially to the Empress."

A few days after this—on the 14th of August—the Empress, accompanied by the Princess Anna Murat and the Countess de Montebello, arrived at Châlons. The Empress took up her abode in the Imperial quarters, and I had the honour to accompany her. On the next day, the 16th, we went to open-air mass in the midst of the military train. Mass being over, horses were brought, and the Emperor, on horseback, held a grand review of the troops, having at his side the Empress, ourselves, and all his staff. From his appearance and his bearing at that moment, no one could possibly have suspected that he was suffering from any illness.

On the 16th of August we set out for Arenenberg. It was a very pleasant journey, and never had the Emperor seemed more cheerful or in better spirits, and this excursion through the delightful country where he spent his younger days revived within him a host of tender and agreeable impressions; these he communicated to us with unequalled affability, doing the honours, as it were, of a land to which most of us were strangers; and all this he did in a simple and good-natured way, accompanied by numberless small attentions which made a lasting impression upon my mind; the remembrance of these few days, indeed, will never be effaced. Far from the luxury and the paraphernalia of their every-day life, this journey seemed to the Emperor and Empress like a liberation from long restraint. We travelled from early morning till late at night, making our way either by railway or boat, or in simple hired vehicles. Certainly no one could have suspected there was anything the matter with the Emperor, and the only precaution he took was to protect himself against the cold, which he disliked very much. I even remember he made a good deal of fun of an old Swiss artillery-man's cloak very much the worse for wear, which had been his ever since he was a lad, and which Léon, his valet, had been very careful always to take with him wherever the Emperor went.

This pleasant journey had a tragic ending. We left the railway station at Neuchâtel in two carriages, and while passing through a dense crowd of people assembled to see their Majesties, the horses of the second vehicle, in which I was, bolted, the driver losing all command of them, the end of it being that the carriage was smashed, and Princess Anne, Madame de Montebello, and myself, were seriously hurt. This accident upset the Emperor a good deal, and he expressed his concern in a very touching manner. The carriage had come into collision with some scaffolding and overturned it, and the materials fell upon the carriage, nearly crushing me under the ruins. They thought, indeed, that I was dying. The Emperor rendered us very active assistance, helping us out of the *débris*, and doing his best to soothe and reassure us, and his eyes were filled with tears when he saw how we were hurt. I afterwards learned that he had another bad attack that night, and that he carefully hid the fact from the Empress, who had sat up with us invalids all through the night. On the following day the Emperor, who showed not the slightest sign of fatigue, returned to Paris, while the Empress remained with us, nursing us with the devotion of a sister of charity; with the same kind of devotion which elicited the heartfelt thanks of a dying man a few months afterwards when she was visiting the cholera patients in the Paris hospitals.

In 1866, 1867, 1868, and 1869, the Emperor did not appear to decline in health.

His step had lost some of its briskness, but that was all that could be noticed in him; and at his time of life that was of course to be expected. He never took to his bed, and apart from the rheumatic pains which increased as the weather got cold, and a few slight attacks of fever which did not prevent him from going about his ordinary duties, he made no signs of the sufferings afterwards revealed by his death. The Emperor never complained.

In 1869, when the Empress went to Egypt to inaugurate the Suez Canal—that great French work, executed by Frenchmen—the Emperor remained at Saint-Cloud with the Prince Imperial; he did not like that the Prince should be deprived of his stay at Compiègne, where he loved to go out hunting, having already become a skilful rider.

This same year the Prince Imperial had been to the camp at Châlons, and his handsome figure, his martial bearing and pleasant youthful countenance, quite won the hearts of the soldiers, with whom he mixed on terms of familiarity. He had been much cheered by the troops, and the Emperor had returned greatly pleased with the good impression his son had made.

Monsieur Bâchon, the Prince's old equerry, and of whom he was very fond, was beside himself for joy; the riding lessons he had given the Prince had been so thoroughly mastered, that at the age of fourteen the lad had become a perfect horseman. M. Bâchon related his triumph to me.

"No other prince could do as he did," said the old man, "passing along the lines of infantry on a full-grown horse, marching with an equal step without the slightest deviation, notwithstanding the clash of the military bands and the reflection of the sun on the bayonets."

As for the Prince, he was quite delighted. He already doted upon the army; his countenance lit up when a regiment passed, and he could tell exactly after inspection which company of any given battalion was not quite in line.

At Chislehurst in 1871, after the war was over, and when close upon his fifteenth birthday, I asked the Prince Imperial what wish he would like to have formed respecting himself, and what he would prefer if the choice of his own destiny was offered to him. "I should like," he said, "to be a sub-lieutenant in the French army, with a salary of 1,800 francs."

The Palace of Compiègne would have been very dull all that autumn of 1869 without company of some kind, and the Emperor retained about forty persons around him, chosen from among those who were called the inner circle of the Court. M. Carette and myself had the honour to be numbered among these privileged persons.

On the 15th of November, the Empress's birthday, the Emperor ordered that notwithstanding the Empress's absence the event should be celebrated as usual. In the evening, after the accustomed display of fireworks, he sat down and wrote a long despatch to the Empress in which all our names figured; then he made us all dance, and to wind up the evening and amuse the Prince, he put himself at the head of a *boulangère*, and led the chain of dancers in and out through the labyrinth of rooms and endless galleries of Compiègne, till the most active among us begged for mercy; the Emperor, however, dragged us along after him with the warmth and vivacity of a young man, and seemed indefatigable.

The reception of the principal persons of the town and department, who always came to greet the Emperor and Empress on their birthdays, took place that year as usual. The Baron Morio de l'Isle, sub-prefect of Compiègne, a man much liked and confided in by the Emperor, had brought about a reconciliation between his Majesty and a rather important personage; it was an old revolutionist of 1848, who made himself conspicuous by his hostility towards the Prince President, and who, after the 2nd of December, had passed at least three days behind the locks and bars. Like many others, however, he wished to come round.

When Morio de l'Isle introduced him, the Emperor received him with the words, "I have not seen you for some time."

"Quite so, Sire," replied the visitor, "not since you put me in prison."

The Emperor regarded him with a sly look, and smilingly answered: "Mon Dieu, we have all passed through that experience."

During their stay the Emperor was unceasing in his attentions to his guests. They hunted, took rides on horseback, or long drives into the country. The Emperor took part in all these recreations, and it was impossible to show greater courtesy, kindness, and good humour than he did.

How could any one have supposed that even at this time the Emperor's health was seriously impaired? He evidently intended to keep the Empress in ignorance of the cause of his sufferings, and those who were able to appreciate the exquisite delicacy of his nature can well understand that he should wish to spare her the anxiety which the knowledge would have caused her. One day, too, at Vichy, when he felt unwell, the Emperor agreed to allow Dr. Conneau, in whom he had every confidence, to perform an operation with the object of giving him some relief. It was only a slight operation, but the doctor unfortunately hurt the Emperor in performing it. From this moment he showed an invincible repugnance for surgical operations. This he afterwards confessed. Although all through his life holding death itself in contempt, this prince experienced a nervous and almost feminine dread of all bodily suffering. Nevertheless after repeated warnings that an attempt upon his life was meditated, I have seen him go out without fear, and nothing could turn him from his purpose.

In May, 1870, some picrate of potassium bombs had been seized, a new engine of destruction which had just been invented. It was known that still more of these bombs were in existence, and the Emperor advised General Frossard not to allow the Prince Imperial to go out. The General asked whether the Prince was threatened.

"No," answered the Emperor with his accustomed calmness, "they want to throw the bombs at me, but they may mistake the carriage." And he went out.

The Emperor knew very well that if he revealed the nature of his malady the Empress would have moved heaven and earth to have him properly treated and cured, but, partly from fatalism and partly from indifference about himself, he authoritatively exacted the profoundest secrecy from the physicians who attended him. Nevertheless, on July 2, 1870, the Duchess de Mouchy having entreated the Emperor to consult Dr. Sée, the Empress prevailed upon him to call a consultation of the first practitioners of Paris. So far, however, from informing the Empress and his ministers of the conclusions arrived at by the physicians, he left them in greater ignorance than ever. There was some talk of anæmia, and of epidermical neuralgic pains, that was all; and the Emperor departed for the army.

The first fatigues of the campaign soon

brought his sufferings to the acute stage. He suffered a thousand deaths in going to meet the bullet he sought for, wishing, as he did, to put an end to the tortures which racked both his body and his mind.

It was at Chislehurst that the Empress learnt the truth. Many public comments had been made upon the impossibility which the Emperor had often experienced in following the army on horseback. The physicians had spoken, and the Press had caught up and propagated their opinions. The Duchess de Mouchy was one of those who had become aware of the conclusions arrived at by the medical men, and towards the middle of December, 1870, she went to spend an afternoon at Camden House. The Empress had been deeply depressed by letters from the Emperor, who was lying ill at Wilhelmshohe, for, knowing how susceptible the Emperor was to cold, her Majesty asked herself whether the severe climate of that place would not prove injurious, and whether, in spite of her repugnance, she ought not to apply to the King of Prussia for the removal of the Emperor to a milder region. The Duchess de Mouchy believed the Empress knew everything, and supposed that her Majesty, usually so confiding, had avoided speaking about the Emperor's disease from a feeling of delicacy.

"But, my aunt," said the Duchess, "the climate has nothing to do with it. In the Emperor's present condition it is an operation that is required, and it ought to be done as soon as possible. That is the opinion of all the physicians."

The Empress was struck with astonishment, and asked for details, on hearing which she exclaimed: "Then it is all over with the Emperor. Why have they kept this from me?" and her grief was intense on being informed of the sufferings her unfortunate husband had so stoically endured.

It was in consequence of this conversation that the Empress quietly left England for Germany with the object of seeing the Emperor, but she was only able to pass a few hours with him in the painful exile of Wilhelmshohe, as the permission to reside there was not granted her.

On the 28th of July, the day after his arrival at head-quarters, the Emperor addressed a proclamation to the army. It bore the stamp of the Emperor's misgivings and preoccupations; nevertheless he spoke with confidence, relying upon the strength of the army and the admirable military spirit which animated it. The 250,000 trained soldiers which we were able to oppose to the German forces at the opening of the campaign permitted, indeed, of a very large degree of hope. Fate, however, betrayed us, and everything went against us in this fatal war. The very surprise manifested by our adversaries at their own successes proves that we had not undertaken the campaign without serious grounds for confidence. (Read the reports rendered by the Prussian military staff.)

In his proclamation to the army, the Emperor, forgetting himself in his solicitude for his country, only spoke of his love for France and of her greatness.

On the 29th of July the Emperor and the Prince Imperial visited the camp of Saint-Avold, close to the frontier, where was posted the 2nd Corps under the command of General Frossard, and on the 2nd of August the first engagement took place. This was the commencement of hostilities, and the taking of Saarbrück was announced in Paris. Much fuss was made about the Prince Imperial having picked up a ball on the field of battle, and the dynastic journals blamed what was deemed the rash exposure of the heir to the throne, while the opposition papers only saw in it a piece of puerile posing. They even went so far as to insinuate that General Frossard, the Prince's tutor and commander of the 2nd Corps, had got up the semblance of a fight at Saarbrück in order to provide the Prince Imperial with his first essay of arms. The real truth, however, was hidden in the maternal heart of the Empress.

"I prefer, in the case of a reverse," she said, "that my son should be with the army; I don't wish them to make of him a little Louis XVII."

Indeed, on the day of the battle of Saarbrück, the troops saw the Emperor and the Prince amongst them at 250 mètres from the line of fire, and one of the officers of the suite was wounded. The Emperor and his son even went upon the ground whence the enemy was dislodged, and the Emperor was able to telegraph to the Empress :—" Louis has borne himself well under fire."

This temporary success, however, which caused great excitement, was not destined to be followed up. Our plan was to act on the offensive; but the slow pace at which the mobilization was effected upset all ideas of attack. In Prussia, on the other hand, all the strong places had been put into a state of defence a long time previous, and the mobilization, carried out in each district separately, was effected with a promptitude far surpassing ours, and order and method applied to the smallest details carried off the first victory. Nevertheless, the organization of the Prussian army was not completed before the 15th of August; but it was effected under the shelter of success, and one single reverse on our territory was capable of bringing on defeat, and the whole aspect of the campaign was changed.

On the 4th of August, the army of the Crown Prince surprised General Douai's troops at Wissembourg, and a fight ensued in which our men were crushed by superior numbers and forced to fall back; from 8 o'clock in the morning, however, until 3 o'clock in the afternoon, eight battalions held in check considerable forces, which were constantly being added to. While our troops were retreating from the field of battle, General Douai was seen, on foot and leading his horse by the bridle, slowly ascending a hill crowned by four Prussian batteries, whose fire was sweeping the plain. Having lost the fight, and seeing his men mowed down, the General went deliberately to meet his death, and soon he was struck by a ball and died a hero.

The Emperor heard of the check at Wissembourg on the evening of the 4th of August. It was then perceived that the

German armies were closer to us than had at first been supposed, and the Emperor, calculating that the still incomplete mobilization would not allow of our opposing a sufficient force to that of the enemy, had a mind to retire towards the Vosges. An intimation was, however, received from Marshal MacMahon that he was able to maintain his position, and asking for reinforcements. In order, therefore, not to thwart his intentions, General de Failly's corps was sent to his assistance, and then the Emperor joined the different *corps-d'armée* under Marshals MacMahon and Bazaine, so as to secure more unity of action. There were then two armies, each composed of three corps.

Marshal MacMahon thought to meet the Crown Prince's troops about the 7th of August, and arrangements had been made for a concentration on that day. But on the morning of the 6th some severe outpost engagements took place at several points of the line in front, and the battle soon became general, fighting going on at Wörth, Gunstett, and Fröschwiller. Towards noon our victorious troops appeared to be masters of the battle-field, and if General de Failly's division had only arrived at that moment, the victory would have been complete. It was the Prussians, however, who received reinforcements, and we were soon outflanked in every direction and doubled up by the cannonade of a formidable artillery. In vain were prodigies of valour and audacity performed; in vain did the humblest soldiers blossom into heroes; in vain was the plain inundated with torrents of French blood; retire they must, and Marshal MacMahon gave the order for retreat.

It was on this day that the memorable charge of cuirassiers was made at Reichshoffen. Our troops had been contending with forces five times more numerous than themselves, and during this time Marshal Bazaine's army, after having disputed the victory with equal valour, was repulsed at Forbach.

The consequence of these sanguinary

conflicts was that our soldiers were worn out with their efforts; ammunition and stores fell short, and important reserves had fallen into the hands of the enemy. On the 10th of August, therefore, the Emperor summoned Marshal Canrobert to Metz, and gave the order to concentrate the troops around that place.

Meantime, the consternation in Paris was indescribable. Every one lived out-of-doors. In the streets and public places people met without knowing each other; news, both true and false, spread like wildfire, especially the false; and groups were formed at the corners of the streets to read in common the papers as they appeared.

The Prussian troops now flocked over the frontier without cessation and spread like a wave over the country, while Marshal MacMahon, continuing his retreat, abandoned the passes of the Vosges, and with the exception of the fortresses, all the territory between the Rhine and Moselle was overrun.

Notwithstanding all this, the efforts of our glorious army, even under defeat, were deemed worthy of recognition, and a subscription was opened to provide a sword of honour to be presented to Marshal MacMahon. I happened to be at the house of one of my friends, the Viscountess Aguado, when Marshal Bazaine's wife was visiting there. This young lady, whom the Marshal married during the Mexican campaign, and who afterwards showed no common energy when her husband's escape was effected, had full confidence in the military attainments of the Marshal, and felt sure that through him the army would take a dazzling revenge. On learning that the Duke de Magenta was going to be the object of such a flattering patriotic demonstration, she warmed up with the remark:—

"If they reward the defeated in this way, what will they do for the conquerors?"

# CHAPTER VI.

The Empress at Saint-Cloud—Admiral Jurien de la Gravière—A despatch from Forbach—A portrait of the Crown Princess of Prussia—M. Emile Ollivier—Departure from Saint-Cloud — The Council of Regency — Marshal Canrobert's wife—General Trochu—Prince Napoleon—Admiral Rigault de Genouilly—General Trochu refuses the Ministry of War—General Palikao—Meeting of the Chambers—Disturbances in Paris—Marshal Baraguay-d'Hilliers—Overthrow of the Ollivier Ministry—His last Council.

After the departure of the Emperor for the army, everything settled down into quiet at Saint-Cloud. The few days which had succeeded had been filled with all kinds of preoccupations. There was so many things to think of; for even if one were a queen, on separating from a husband and a child one would wish to see for oneself that everything had been prepared for and their welfare assured. The Empress remained at Saint-Cloud with her two young nieces, daughters of the Duchess d'Albe, who had resided with her for many years, and a limited number of attendants.

It may easily be imagined what a severe shock the Empress experienced on learning of our first reverses. But, after all, she thought, they were merely outpost affairs, and could not have any permanent ill effect. Then she received intelligence that a great engagement was to take place on the 7th of August, and despatches were awaited with the utmost anxiety.

Admiral Jurien de la Gravière, aide-de-camp to the Emperor, had been chosen to remain near the Empress, and during these days of trial he surrounded her with the most generous and respectful devotion. He had taken up his residence with his family near the palace, at Saint-Cloud, in order to be at the Empress's disposal at any hour. Just about the hour of dinner on the 7th he arrived at the palace with one of his daughters, when some one said to him as he entered: "There seems to be some very bad news from the army." He immediately made his way to the Empress's study, and found her completely broken down, tearless and voiceless, and supported by her two nieces, who were in tears. The Empress handed him a paper on which the gentleman-in-waiting, the Count de Cossé-Brissac, had just transcribed the first few words of a cipher despatch. It was dated from Forbach, and ran as follows:—

"The whole army is retreating; we must raise our courage to the height of circumstances."

Monsieur de Brissac was in the adjoining room, finishing the translation of the despatch, and while the Admiral was reading, in a state of trepidation, M. de Brissac entered hurriedly, and read in a loud voice the closing words of the despatch—"All may yet be restored."

At these words the Empress fell on her knees, and her tears, so long kept back, came rolling down her face.

"I entreat you, Madame," said the Admiral, "to calm yourself."

"Ah! I thank God," she answered, "that there is still room for hope."

She immediately decided to return to Paris, so that the Government should be brought together *en permanence.*

"Admiral, you will not leave me," she said; "I count upon you."

After a rapid meal, and without troubling herself about any of her personal belongings, the Empress hastily gathered together all the State papers likely to be requisite; and the necessary orders being given, every one left Saint-Cloud without further preparation.

When the Prussians visited the palace at the time of the fire, they found, amongst other despatches, one addressed by the Empress to the Countess de Montijo, announcing the departure of the Prince Imperial for the army. This despatch was published in all the German papers, and was in these terms:—"Louis will start with his father in a few days for the army, and I wish you to send him your blessing. Do not be uneasy; I am perfectly calm. He must do his duty, and bring honour to his name.—EUGÈNIE."

Among the objects taken away by the Prussians was a portrait of the Crown Princess of Prussia, the Princess Victoria, daughter of the Queen of England. It was obtained in this way. A large painting representing the arrival of the Queen of England at Saint-Cloud in 1854 hung in the principal staircase. The Princess Victoria, who was not yet married, accompanied the Queen on that occasion, and in this picture her young face, encircled in a rose-coloured hat, stood out by the side of that of the Queen; and when the palace was all in flames, the Prussian officers cut the painting around the Princess's portrait and carefully preserved the piece.

In the meantime the rumour of a defeat had spread through Paris, and when it was known that we had really again been beaten the consternation of the people of the faubourgs, where ideas of revolt were already fermenting, was changed into fury. The word "treason" passed from mouth to mouth,—that bitter and fatal word which came to be mixed up with all our disasters.

The agitators marched to the Place Vendôme and besieged the offices of the Ministry of Justice. M. Emile Ollivier was on his way thither, accompanied by a friend. He had just come from Saint-Cloud, which he had quitted before the arrival of the Forbach despatch, and he did not know the news. He was on foot, but the crowd recognized and surrounded him, hooting and insulting him, and attempting to get possession of his person. They accused the Government of incompetency, and this was the commencement of its unpopularity.

Madame Emile Ollivier was watching her husband's arrival from the window, and from the attitude of the people she could see he was in danger. A few young men, attached to the Ministry of Justice, then rushed out and succeeded in reaching the Keeper of the Seals, and pressing around him with great difficulty, escorted him into the building and shut the door behind him.

The crowd had by this time become more boisterous and enraged than ever, and loud calls for M. Emile Ollivier were raised; this gentleman therefore appeared on the balcony and made a speech, which succeeded in quieting and dispersing the mob.

Messages had meantime been sent by the Prefect of Police to Saint-Cloud to the effect that threats had been uttered against the Empress, and that a descent from the faubourgs was to be feared. Towards midnight a large landau drew up to the main entrance to the palace, and the Empress took her seat in it, accompanied by the Countess de Rayneval, lady of honour, the aged General Mollard, aide-de-camp to the Emperor, and Admiral Jurien de la Gravière. All through the journey they were in momentary expectation of meeting bands of rioters marching on Saint-Cloud, and not a word was exchanged between them. However, they met with no molestation, and by two o'clock in the morning they were in Paris.

The Council of Regency, which assembled on the receipt of the news of defeat, had repaired to the Tuileries to await the arrival of the Empress, and Marshal Baraguay-d'Hilliers, General de Chabaud-Latour (one of the veterans of the army), and General Trochu, had been summoned to take part in it. During this sitting, which did not break up till daylight, energetic measures were taken to place the capital in a state of defence, and the immediate assembling of the *Corps Législatif* was decided upon, the Regent considering, out of respect for the constitutional laws, that it was a duty she owed the country to call together its representatives in such a serious crisis.

Some time afterwards, General de Chabaud-Latour, who was well known for his attachment to the princes of the Orleans family, was called upon to give evidence before the Committee of Inquiry on the events of the 4th of September, and among other things he said: "It was on the night of the 7th–8th of August. News had just arrived from Forbach and Reichshoffen, and I had been summoned with the Ministers to meet the Empress. Her language was noble and dignified. 'It is not,' she said, 'a question of saving the Empire; it is a question of saving France.'"

General Trochu, also, among the numerous statements he has thought proper to publish, thus alludes to the same circumstance: "The Empress was calm, courageous, and dignified, and the sentiments she expressed were much more French than Imperialist. I will render her that justice."

But this was a very short-lived impression. A fortnight later it was M. Jules Favre who was admired and consulted by General Trochu, who claimed for himself the title of President of the Government of National Defence.

The minds of those—and they were very numerous—who had relatives in the army, were greatly troubled by the uncertain, exaggerated, and contradictory nature of the information published. The telegraph lines being all taken over for the exclusive use of the Government and the army, the greatest difficulty was experienced in obtaining authentic news. The wife of Marshal Canrobert had heard indirectly of the battles of Wörth and Fröschwiller, and being anxious in the absence of letters from the Marshal, she decided on the 7th of August to make inquiries of the Empress about him, and setting out for Saint-Cloud, she arrived there at about ten o'clock at night. The palace was wrapped in the deepest silence, and she drove up to the entrance in a splendid moonlight without meeting a soul. Thinking the lights had been extinguished on account of the heat, and that doubtless everybody was taking the air among the flower-beds, she went into the drawing-room to wait for the Empress. But all the apartments were deserted. At last, however, she came across one of the servants, who informed her of the hasty departure of the Court for

Paris on receipt of news from the army and the alarming threats of the Parisian populace.

From the very opening of the campaign, therefore, the Empress had to contend with the twin troubles of military disasters and threatened disturbance at home, so seriously complicating the difficulties of a dreadful situation.

It might be a matter for astonishment that General Trochu should have been at this time in Paris, a man whose fame would appear to have marked him out for one of the most active posts with the army. But it was quite a chance appointment. At the moment of entering on the campaign, one important question to be considered was the part the fleet would be called upon to play in the war; and it was decided that a powerful diversion should be made by the despatch of a squadron to the Baltic, with a corps of 40,000 men, of which the infantry of marine, which had done good service in over-sea expeditions, should form the nucleus.

It was the Emperor's idea to give to Prince Napoleon the superior command of the fleet and the army forming the landing corps, and the Prince agreeing to accept the post, requested that General Trochu, a personal friend of his, might have the command of the troops. The Emperor agreed to this willingly, and was indeed glad to find a General agreeable to Prince Napoleon and desirous of serving under him. This question was to be decided at one of the Ministerial Councils held at Saint-Cloud. Admiral Rigault de Genouilly kept the Council waiting, and the Emperor watched at the window for his arrival, impatiently tapping the panes, with some apparent restlessness. It was the Emperor's wish that Prince Napoleon should be sent to the Baltic, as it was a measure that would smooth the way for many things. He was quite aware, however, that on a recent voyage of the Prince on a vessel of the squadron under Admiral Rigault, a serious difference had arisen between them, and that the Admiral had been greatly exasperated. The Emperor, however, would not decide anything without the advice of his Minister of Marine.

Now Admiral Rigault de Genouilly was deeply attached to the Emperor, and was a man of great talent and ingenuity; he also had a very exalted idea of duty, and was very authoritative. When he was consulted on this matter, as soon as the first words were spoken, he declared that if Prince Napoleon was called upon during the war to set foot on board a vessel, he would immediately resign office; the Emperor therefore permitted the scheme to drop.

In this Baltic command, quite detached from the main operations, General Trochu had seen an opportunity for the brilliant display of his military talents; but disasters having occurred so early, the idea of this expedition had to be abandoned. The marines were all ordered up for the defence of the territory, and the ships remained in port. In the meantime all the great commands had already been allotted to other Generals.

And this is why General Trochu was still in Paris, and without employment, on the night of the 6th–7th August.

General Trochu, it may be mentioned, had a high notion of his own importance, and inaction at such a time was a very great trouble to him. Putting aside the fact that events had upset all the plans which had been formed, he imagined that while others would have numberless opportunities of distinguishing themselves, it had been the deliberate intention to keep him away from the theatre of war; and he was naturally greatly embittered at the thought. It must certainly be conceded that he had good grounds for dissatisfaction, being one of the youngest Generals of the army; but then it was not possible on the spur of the moment to find an acceptable post for him, when the arrangement made on his behalf fell through. The Empress, besides, with a mind racked by overwhelming cares, thought she could count upon the self-denial of every one, and did not perceive that she was getting into collision with a man who was not to be trifled with.

General Dejean, who had succeeded Marshal Lebœuf as Minister of War, only appeared to be called upon to play a very insignificant part, and in the midst of fresh complications he was found unequal to his task. His colleagues in the Cabinet therefore came to the conclusion that a more active man must be placed in the position—a good organizer, whose name should be better known, and with whom they could get along more comfortably.

The names of Bazaine and Trochu were on every one's lips. They had both managed to surround themselves with the halo of unappreciated talents; they had the reputation, too, of being fault-finders, and such men are always looked up to in France. They were pointed at from every quarter as the men best able to make good our reverses. They had, in fact, the confidence of the country, and that counted for a good deal at such a time. In the logic of the masses—somewhat similar to that of babies who form their impressions without reasoning things out—the problem was put thus: "Since other Generals have been beaten, it must be because they were incapable; if these had been in their place they would have shown more ability." And then people began to grow wise after the event, and to pass opinions upon what should and what should not have been done. Indeed, the simple fact of these two Generals not having been with the army seemed sufficient to point them out as the ones to lead the nation to victory.

The fame of public men does not, however, rest upon their talents alone: good luck counts for a great deal, and those whose greatness, heroism, and genius were at that time so loudly proclaimed, were, after the national collapse, only looked upon as stupid and vulgar tyrants. But then passions calm down, and history comes and remodels the life of men according to their merits. And thus it is that enlightened souls have loomed up into fame, while counterfeit celebrities have fallen back into oblivion.

On the 7th of August M. Emile Ollivier telegraphed the following to the Emperor: "Dejean inspires no confidence in any one. I ask your Majesty to authorize me to sign a decree, in your name, appointing General Trochu. Its effect on public opinion will be invaluable."

Parliamentary men were pleased with General Trochu. He was an eloquent critic; his most trivial conversation took the turn at once of a speech from the Tribune or a public declaration, and his facile elocution seduced those who believed in the ascendency of words. An illusion handed down from other and olden times! In an age of matter-of-fact and of scientific progress like ours, when the electric spark transmits our thoughts so promptly and so plainly, and when the cannon has such a loud voice in affairs, it is acts and facts, and not words, which must lead and govern men; mere speechifying has lost its power.

After the defeat of the army, the Cabinet of the 19th of January, which had taken the responsibility of declaring war, was hated and despised. It was shaken to the foundation, and — although perhaps its existence was good for the country—it was tottering to its fall. General Trochu could see this, and refused to enter it. In vain did M. Schneider, President of the Chamber, urge him to accept office, and in vain did the Empress commission the Admiral Jurien de la Gravière to appeal to his patriotism, and entreat him to take the post.

They said to him: "You are capable of rendering the most valuable services. You are a great organizer. The War Minister has now a grand part to play, to facilitate the work of the army, and remedy the disorder that follows defeat."

The Empress even went so far as to offer General Trochu the Presidency of the Council, feeling sure she could rely upon the patriotism of M. Emile Ollivier, and ask any sacrifice from him. M. Ollivier himself pressed this offer upon the General, but he replied: "My entry into the Cabinet will not delay the fall of the Ministry a single day; events are overwhelming it." The General, indeed, knew what he was about, and nothing could shake him. Another plan had therefore to be resorted to, and the War portfolio was accepted by General Palikao.

The Council of Regency, which had its first sitting at the Tuileries on the night of the 6th–7th of August, met again on the following day, and, on its rising, Admiral Jurien de la Gravière and General Trochu left the Council Chamber together, and on their way to the drawing-room a little conversation occurred.

"Do you believe, General," asked the Admiral, "that we may still be able to save France and stop the German invasion?"

Then the General, in reply, began to talk to those around him of all he had said, written, and thought about politics for many years past, when the Admiral interrupted him—

"It is not a question of politics now," he said; "I am speaking as a soldier. Do you believe that the Empire will be able to save France?"

The General answered sharply: "The war cannot be separated from politics; war *is* politics. I can't tell where fate may carry me." Then he declared that his wish was, in the midst of such grave events, to keep himself right in the eyes of posterity; his mind was sadly haunted, he said, by the memory of Marshal Marmont, and added:

"My desire has been to take time by the forelock, and I have set down all my opinions and forethoughts in a will which I have placed in the custody of Monsieur Ducloux (a notary of Paris). It is not for the disposal of my fortune I make the will, for I have only a hundred francs of *rentes*, and eleven children."

The General was very fond of talking of the eleven children of whom he was not the father.

The above conversation took place in the presence of Count de Cossé Brissac, the Empress's Chamberlain; Prince Poniatowski, equerry to the Emperor; an orderly officer; and Admiral Jurien de la Gravière, the latter being the only one sufficiently intimate with the General to take any interest in his private affairs. Besides, at such moments as those, the life and welfare of every one are so closely bound up with the fortunes of the country, that personal considerations lose much of their value.

After having vainly pressed the War portfolio upon General Trochu, M. Emile Ollivier offered it to General Palikao, then in command at Lyons, and this General came immediately to Paris.

By a curious turn of events, General Palikao, invited by M. Emile Ollivier to join his Ministry as Minister of War, was entrusted with the formation of the Cabinet of the 22nd of January, which replaced it.

As soon as he got into office, the new War Minister imparted a vigorous impetus to the measures for military reorganization; new *corps-d'armée* were established rapidly; and General Trochu received the command of the 12th Corps, which he joined at Châlons, and met the Emperor there.

The consequences of the political *rôle* which General Trochu was called upon to play as Governor of Paris during the siege were so serious that it may be interesting here to glance at the different phases of his career.

In 1852, after the *coup d'état*, and when the army was appealed to for its opinion on the new form of government, Trochu, *chef d'escadron* of the military staff, wrote the following on the margin of his voting-paper: "I vote *No*, because that is my duty." A plain and simple negative was by no means enough for him, burning, as he always was, with a desire to break out into a flood of words.

Six weeks later, when the Empire had been re-established and rested upon the votes of millions, the same officer refused the important post of deputy-superintendent of the *personnel* at the Ministry of War, offered him by Marshal de Saint-Arnaud. For a young officer, this was an enviable position, assuring him considerable influence in the army; and the testimony of all his chiefs, especially the high authority of Marshal Bugeaud, whose aide-de-camp he had been in Africa, showed Trochu to be a distinguished and brilliant officer, and a hard worker. On declining the offer made him by the Minister of War, he said: "I am in a too delicate situation; I should compromise you, and I cannot accept."

The proposal was renewed by the Marshal two days later. It must be mentioned that M. Trochu was not at this time the *only* distinguished officer in the French army; there were a great many more, and a large number of them were devoted to the Empire. But in this circumstance Marshal Saint-Arnaud was acting at the instigation of the Emperor. With the serenity of all truly great minds, the Emperor was forgetful of insults, even to rashness. What was his thought in offering a position—an important one, too, for a man of Trochu's rank—to an officer who had just given such a conspicuous proof of his hostility?

"Press it upon him," said the Emperor to the Minister of War; "I want to give the army a pledge of my desire for reconciliation and confidence."

Marshal Saint-Arnaud was a man well acquainted with human nature, and, like a shrewd man that he was, he changed the request to an order, and M. Trochu had to yield. He assisted loyally and zealously in all the acts performed by Marshal Saint-Arnaud's ministry, and came to be so much appreciated by his chief that, in 1854, he was appointed first aide-de-camp to the Marshal in the Crimean campaign, in the course of which he took an active part in the organization of the army. After the battle of the Alma, Colonel Trochu was made Brigadier-General, and soon afterwards he was offered the post of Chief of the Military Staff. This, however, he refused, in order not to supplant General de Martimprey. The refusal of this post redounds to his honour, but it does not lead to the inference that the Imperial Government wished to keep him in the background.

He was wounded at the assault on the Malakoff, and on his return home he was offered the position of Inspector-General of Infantry. This, again, he refused, alleging that his ideas on military organization—a subject which the Emperor had already made his own—did not appear to be those which it was advisable to put into practice. And yet this was the proper occasion for seeking to demonstrate their value. In the war with Italy his division fought splendidly at Solferino, under the orders of Marshal Canrobert. From 1859 to 1867 he filled the positions of member of the Staff Committee and Inspector of Infantry; and the command of the China expedition was placed at his disposal before it was offered to General Montauban. Once more he refused. He might also have been aide-de-camp to the Emperor and member of the Senate, and many other positions were open to him, but he continued to sulk and keep himself aloof.

Whenever an opportunity occurred, the Emperor showed his desire to conciliate

General Trochu and to honour him as a man who had rendered service to his country. He lost a brother, who left behind him a widow and eleven children, and the Emperor, knowing that this brother possessed no fortune, sent a sum of 20,000 francs to the mother of the numerous family. The General thereupon asked for an audience of the Emperor, and, after expressing his thanks, he returned to the Emperor the 20,000 francs, saying that he had undertaken to provide for his brother's children. Nevertheless, he consented to accept for his sister-in-law a profitable tobacconist's business, and money to provide his nephews and nieces with an education.

In 1867, at the time when Marshal Niel was planning the reorganization of the army, General Trochu went to spend a few days at Compiègne, as he was a member of the Commission charged with the task of drafting the new laws. A little time previous to this he had published a pamphlet which made a great noise in Europe, and in which the weak points of our military *régime* were exposed. In this pamphlet, which was a clever epitome of the ideas put forth by all competent military authorities, General Trochu did not spare from criticism a single institution of our army, and fell back upon other systems to point out the remedy.

This work was much commented upon, and had been read by the Empress, and her Majesty expressed her sympathy for the author of such a courageous act of independence which would be sure to stir up a considerable amount of ill-will.

I was at Compiègne at the same time as the General, and he had a very gracious reception. He rarely came to Court, and knew very few people there; knowing, therefore, that it would please the Empress, and seeing he was somewhat isolated, I asked him on the evening of his arrival to give me his arm on passing in to dinner. The General protested, with a great show of modesty:

"I cannot accept your kind offer," he

said; "your place is in the first rank, and I must remain mixed up with the crowd."

I did my best to reassure him, remarking that all the Emperor's guests were equal; but I could not help perceiving that in this modest attitude, for which no reason existed, there lurked a kind of affectation, Generals of Division having usually the precedence before most of those with whom they come in contact. During this stay of General Trochu at Compiègne he had several conversations with the Empress, for whom he loudly expressed his admiration and respect; in fact he had a long conversation with me on the subject.

The *Corps Législatif* assembled on the 9th of August. A large number of Deputies were, however, already in Paris previous to the opening of the Session, and the different parties formed themselves into groups to discuss the situation, each one giving expression to his passion, his ambition, or his fears.

In the eyes of one considerable party in the Chamber, the Cabinet of the 2nd of

January represented a dangerous policy. The regret felt by some that the Emperor had parted with a portion of his authority in inaugurating a more liberal era, appeared to be warranted by the agitation reigning in Paris. In the eyes of this party the ministers were responsible for the revolutionary tendencies which prevailed, and which were getting more acute, adding a new danger to the already difficult situation; and they decided to send a deputation to the Empress asking for the dismissal of the Ollivier Cabinet.

The Empress, however, considered that a ministerial crisis in presence of the enemy would only cast further serious trouble upon the country, and refused to part with her Ministers.

On the 9th of August, the day of the meeting of the Chamber, a surging crowd surrounded the *Corps Législatif*, and those who were destined to become leaders in the insurrection of the 4th of September met together there and harangued the mob. The Marshal Baraguay-d'Hilliers, Governor of Paris, had been warned by the police, and was present in person to see that every measure was taken to enable the representatives of the nation to deliberate in security. An invasion of the Chamber was presently attempted, and the crowd penetrated as far as the gardens. Then the old Marshal, carrying his hat under his mutilated arm, advanced alone with uncovered head to meet the mob, and his aged but bronzed and energetic countenance assumed an expression of dignified authority.

"Come now," he said, in a sharp, clear voice, "go back and get away from here. If you do not, you know I am not to be played with."

They took him at his word, and there was no occasion to send for the troops.

The sitting of the Chamber was a very noisy one. The Ministers had an unfavourable reception, and had great difficulty in making themselves heard, and some violent attacks were made on M. Emile Ollivier. The leaders of the party of irreconcilables demanded the immediate arming of the

National Guard, and raised a discussion which was carried on with the greatest animosity, and which ended in an order of the day expressing want of confidence in the Ministry. This was carried with an immense majority, and the Ministers immediately withdrew to place their resignation in the hands of the Regent.

A Cabinet Council had been held that morning, at which M. Emile Ollivier had insisted upon the Emperor's return to Paris. The Empress was, however, opposed to this plan, regarding the return of the Emperor, and the abandonment of his soldiers after defeat, as an act unworthy of a ruler. Moreover she had been informed that the return of the Emperor to Paris would arouse the hostility of the populace.

The Emperor had already practically given up the command, and if he had returned defeated to Paris,, shorn of the prestige which attaches to the conqueror and prejudiced by the ill-feeling stirred up against the Government, would he have succeeded in restoring confidence? There were too many good reasons for fearing that a return under these circumstances would rather be the signal for a terrible insurrection. Nevertheless, M. Emile Ollivier defended his proposal with the greatest energy against the Empress's opposition; but her Majesty was resolute: "As soon as we obtain the slightest advantage," she said, "then let the Emperor return to the capital."

And how was it possible to abandon hope of victory as yet, hostilities having only just begun? And if the tide should turn in our favour—every one would rally to the Emperor's support. But there would be an end to his authority if he should succumb to the insults of the Paris populace, and it was quite out of the question to look for respect and indulgence from the Parisians after the checks the army had experienced. Paris, too, was now almost entirely void of troops; all had gone to the frontier, and if a disturbance arose it would have been impossible to quell it.

These were the considerations |which

were constantly prompting the Empress to spare the Emperor from the dangers to which he would be exposed, and which she at the same time considered would be hurtful to the interests of the country. In her mind, the honour of France would have been more gravely compromised by revolution in face of the enemy than by defeat.

M. Ollivier also proposed, after having accomplished the return of the Emperor, to arrest all the leaders of the Opposition during the night, and the warrants were already prepared; but the Empress would not consent to it.

During this sitting of the Council, and while the discussion—a very lively one—was proceeding, M. Emile Ollivier was exposed to a draught from the window, and not being at all well—having contracted a hoarseness the day before when addressing the mob from the balcony—he asked for permission to close the window, saying that he should want to speak in the Chamber. The Empress then rose from her seat and, going to the window, shut it with her own hands.

The last interview of the Empress with the Ministers forming the Cabinet of the 2nd of January was short and painful for all. Together they had passed through the time of a triumphant plebiscite, and now they were separating, with grief in their hearts, at a moment when the greatest perils were threatening the country. But words are futile and childish when the same trials have been passed through and the same evils suffered by all.

The Regent invited General Palikao to select a new Cabinet, and M. Emile Ollivier was then charged to announce the formation of a new Ministry.

It was his last act as a Minister, and a few days afterwards he retired to Switzerland, where he remained until the war was over.

## CHAPTER VII.

**The Empress-Regent — Borny — Longeville — Nancy — The 15th of August in Paris — The 15th of August in Metz — Marshal Canrobert — The rural firemen — Preparations for the Siege — The Red Cross Society — The Baroness de Bourgoing — The Wife of Marshal Canrobert — Madame Coralie Cahen — The Department of the Aisne — Activity in Paris — The Tuileries — The Villette Riot — General Vinoy.**

THE Empress now entered upon the most painful and overwhelming task that was ever imposed upon any woman or any sovereign.

In a country like ours, as soon as the cannon speaks, every other authority ceases. And now that all our armies had been crushed on the frontier, without allies, and with a Chamber that was falling to pieces, the Empress had to undertake the burden

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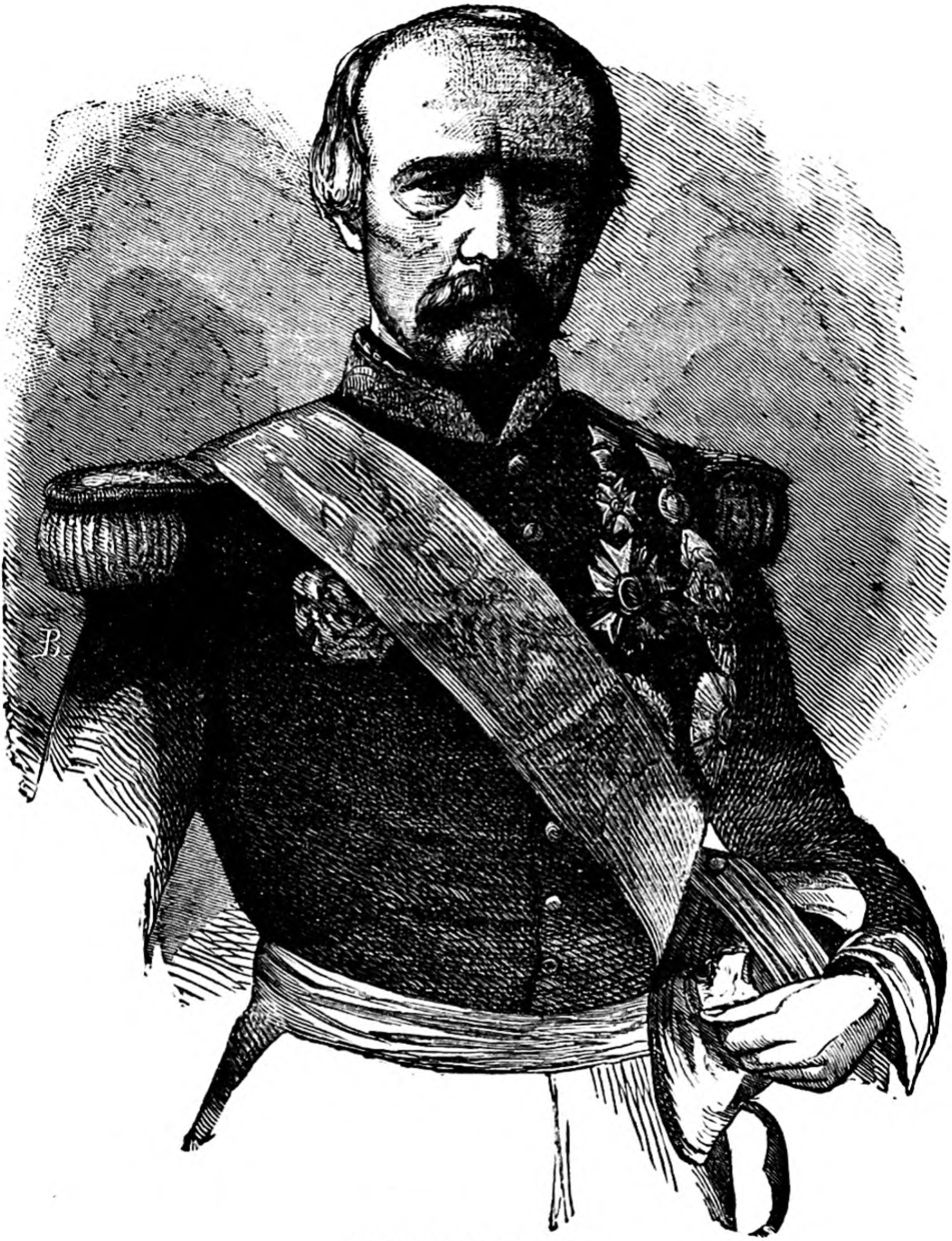
of directing, encouraging, and restraining the nation. She had to endeavour to maintain the authority of a Government, whose existence was threatened by the most fatal dissensions.

The elections of 1869 had been based upon a promise of disarmament, in spite of the ideas clearly expressed by the Emperor and Marshal Niel, as is proved by the electioneering speeches delivered at the time without distinction of party.

The Chamber would not now accept the responsibilities of defeat; it wasted its energies in an enervating parliamentarism, meddled imprudently with military questions, and kept the country in a state of agitation by the statements true or false made from the tribune, and which were accepted without question. And in this way hints were given to the enemy, of which he was not slow to avail himself, as may be gathered from the reports of the Prussian staff.

Painful suspicions respecting the part the Emperor was taking with the army were continually being aroused, and in the Chamber M. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire insidiously vexed the Government with the question whether Marshal Bazaine had really the absolute and unfettered command of the army, and whether the Imperial Guard marched under his orders, in the same way as the other corps.

Marshal MacMahon, in giving evidence in a celebrated lawsuit, referred to the circumstances under which he had been placed in command of the army of Châlons — now under the orders of Marshal Bazaine. And his words have incontestably a great historical value. They are these: "When I was appointed to the command of the army of Châlons, I asked the Emperor what were to be the relations between him, as sovereign, and the commander-in-chief of that army. The Emperor replied that, for reasons which he need not mention, he had decided not to take any active part himself, and that he gave the command over to me, and should not interfere with the operations. I must say that all the movements



MARSHAL MACMAHON.

which were ordered, were ordered by me, and were indeed, as is well known, the reverse of what the Emperor wished to be done." The loyal manner in which the Marshal thus took upon himself the responsibility of all the operations of the army of Châlons, did honour to the defeated hero of Reichshoffen and Sedan.

The threatened disturbances in Paris, Lyons, and several other large towns, began to be a serious cause for alarm, and intelligent people were beginning to see that our dissensions were aiding the efforts of the enemy.

In the midst of all these trials, the Empress showed proof of a firmness and largeheartedness which, perhaps, might have been expected of her by her friends, but which surprised those who were less acquainted with her and saw less of her. In the eyes of the Emperor, the mission of the Imperial dynasty, that had been established and confirmed by the national will, was to give to France glory and prosperity, and the Regent, all through this period, raising herself above all personal considerations, was solely engrossed with the interests of the country.

Faithful to the views and wishes of the Emperor, when any political suggestion was submitted to her — having for its object the securing of her son's future, or the maintenance of the rights of the Imperial Government — the Empress invariably replied: "We do not trouble ourselves about the dynasty; we are only thinking of France."

The first thing the Empress did was to despatch all the available troops to the frontier; and this she did at the risk of her life, at the cost of the throne, and in spite of the revolutionary threats levelled against her. She said that French blood was too precious a thing at that time, and that not a drop should be shed in her defence.

Animated by this same spirit the Empress quitted the Tuileries on the 4th of September, laying down without a struggle a power which the drunken and noisy rioters wrenched from her, at a time when the noblest of our sons were falling on the battle-fields, and when the victorious enemy was penetrating into the heart of the country.

It has even been pretended that the Empress, yielding to an idle ambition, had precipitated the country into a guilty war with the object of wresting the power from the Emperor's hands; and in order to invest this fable with some appearance of probability, the Emperor has been represented as suffering from a mental weakness which robbed him of all initiative. The truth is, however, that although the Emperor's health was seriously affected, his great and noble mind never gave way for a single hour, but remained clear and steadfast up to the last day of his life.

Such insinuations as these, however, melt away on even the shortest reflection, and have not, as a matter of fact, been able to stand the test of time.

We must not forget, besides, that in the Imperial Government the personality of the sovereign held a preponderant position; that the country, three times consulted, had entrusted to him the care of its destinies; that around the Emperor's person was grouped a cluster of devoted, enlightened, and talented statesmen. How, then, is it possible to suppose that the Empress should have dreamt for a moment of supplanting one who for twenty years had ruled with an authority and a prestige hitherto unknown to France?

Had not the Empress, for a period of eighteen years, been closely watching the difficulties in the midst of which the principles of the Imperial Government had developed? She was well acquainted with the temper of the French people, and leaving out of sight the high and generous motives which constantly ruled the Regent's mind, how could she have been so infatuated as not to understand that a Government entrusted to feminine hands would not have the slightest chance of continuance in France, even if that were admitted which is false, namely, that the Emperor's faculties were beginning to fail him?

Was it not, on the contrary, the interest of the Empress, as a ruler and a mother, to play a part in politics the object of which should be the preservation of the Emperor's prestige? She was intelligent and clear-sighted, and knew perfectly well that anything having a tendency to lessen the Emperor's personal importance would weaken the whole system of government. And on what forces could she rely at such a time to serve as a foundation for ambitious aspirations?

Ambitious? Yes, the Empress was ambitious; but the object of her ambition was the greatness of France and her husband's glorification. If the Empress had had a taste for power and intrigue—handsome, fawned upon, and almost worshipped as she was—the dissensions among political parties would have furnished her with abundant opportunities for playing a part which even now might occupy her mind. Did she ever seek to protest against imputations peculiarly offensive to a proud heart like hers? Has she not accepted the burden of certain responsibilities which party spite has tried to heap upon her?

If the Empress's character had been such as these cowardly insinuations suggest, should we have seen her—unconcerned about personal matters, deprived of both home and family, and separated by her grief from the world—shut herself up in solitude and silence, as if her life had had no other object than the happiness of those she loved? For the last twenty years, this lady, whose grace and beauty have dazzled the world, has looked for no further pleasure in life. Her soul has learnt the futility of human greatness. Her time is spent in nursing sad remembrances, and her memory, like her heart, is buried in the tomb of her husband and son.

On the 14th of August, in the same year, a despatch from the Emperor reported a success at Borny and Longeville, but it was announced at the same time that Nancy was occupied by a detachment of Prussian cavalry. The fact was, that four uhlans—those uhlans about whom so many tales were told, and who throughout the campaign were found in the van of every movement of the Prussian army — had ridden into Nancy, an open town, like four sportsmen on their way to join a hunting party.

The 15th of August was one of the days of that painful period which will never be effaced from my memory. This day was usually set apart for public rejoicing, and it was a very rare thing for the Empress to pass the day alone. All the members of the rural fire-brigades had been summoned to Paris to assist in the defence of the capital; and the public highways were crowded with these brave fellows, marching from the villages, with their helmets and old-fashioned accoutrements. Their step was anything but martial, for all the young and healthy men had gone to join the army, and those who were left were for the most part unfit to take the field. In Paris they walked about the streets all day long, accepting drinks offered by the inhabitants.

The heat was oppressive on the 15th, and towards evening, after the Tuileries garden was closed, the Empress, with her head wrapped in white lace, was walking, pale and silent, under the tall chesnut trees. She was accompanied by a small group of attendants, but not a word was exchanged. On reaching the lake their ears were suddenly assailed by the discordant sounds of numberless trumpets. It was the firemen mustering in the Place de la Concorde, to march to their different lodgings.

All through the day the thought of this impotent multitude had troubled the Empress's mind, and the deafening noise now proceeding from it caused such a shock to her nerves that we retraced our steps. The sky was fiery red, and the picturesque mass of the Tuileries stood out against it in strong relief. "Look!" said the Empress, suddenly raising her voice and addressing herself to me, "one would think the Tuileries were in flames." And on entering her apartments the Empress's face bore a rigid expression which struck me painfully. In her white dress, light veil, pinched-up features, and transparent paleness, one would have taken her for a marble statue.

On the morning of that same day—the day following the battle of Borny and the one previous to Rezonville—Marshal Canrobert, having learnt that the Emperor was preparing to leave Metz with Marshal MacMahon's army, went to pay his respects to him before his departure. On arriving at the Saint-Martin encampment he found the Emperor in a tavern just taking a cup of muddy coffee, such as is made in the villages. He was sitting with his head resting on his hand, silent and motionless, and seemed deeply concerned.

"Ah! is it you, Marshal?" said the Emperor, taken unawares. "What is the matter? Any news?"

"No, Sire," replied the Marshal; "but to-day is the 15th of August, your Majesty's birthday, and, as I have done for many years, I bring you my best wishes."

"Yes, so it is," returned the Emperor, sadly shaking his head; "but I had not thought about it. It is very kind of you to have remembered it, Marshal."

The Emperor then fell back into silence, but the Marshal resumed the conversation and urged the necessity of a speedy departure. The situation, he said, was critical, and retreat might be cut off at any moment. After some further conversation the departure was fixed for the next morning.

The Marshal was right in his conclusions, for the enemy was indeed close at hand. Scarcely had the Marshal taken his leave of the Emperor, when a shell burst in the middle of his staff, killing two officers and wounding several other persons. This was the last interview Marshal Canrobert had with the Emperor during the campaign, up to the time of the confinement at Wilhelmshohe.

A feverish activity now reigned in Paris. It was like an immense ants'-nest; every one's efforts tending towards a single end, and individual life seeming to have ceased.

Every inhabitant rendered all the assistance in his power towards the common defence, and thus a kind of good-natured confraternity had been established among the population; the various Government departments also laying themselves under contribution for the common weal.

Paris became transformed into a vast camp. With astonishing rapidity the life of the city was changed, and all minds were centred upon one single thought and object, each one emulating the other in working for the benefit of the whole.

A powerful union while it lasted, but, alas ! it was only for a short time.

Father Philippe, superior of the brotherhood of the Ecoles Chrétiennes, came to see the Empress, and placed the services of all the *frères* at her disposition, and many of the sacks to be filled with earth for placing on the fortifications were made by them. Every person, whether dwelling in garret, mansion, workshop, hospital, or prison, received his task, and heaps of lint were manufactured by the feeble fingers of aged people and children, as well as by the delicate hands of elegant and aristocratic ladies; an equal desire being manifested from the houses of the rich to the hovels of the poor to have a hand in allaying the sufferings which the fighting would surely bring with it.

The Palais de l'Industrie was filled with contributions of all kinds for the comfort and relief of our soldiers; all gifts being brought together in that building; and here, too, were the headquarters of the Red Cross Society of Geneva, formed for rendering assistance to the wounded on land and sea, and which modestly performed so many heroic deeds and accomplished so much good. The Emperor and Empress had deeply interested themselves in this work from the very first, contributing to its development by considerable gifts of money, linen, and all kinds of things. The Empress reserved the presidency of this association for herself. The Rothschild family also generously supported it, and largely provided it with funds. The management of it was undertaken by the Count de Flavigny after the Emperor joined the army, and subsequently the Countess de Flavigny became president. The surgical branch of the Society was under the direction of Doctor Nélaton, and owing to the practical instruction he was able to impart, numbers of ladies belonging to all classes of society soon learned the art of dressing the wounds and attending to the wants of the sick and injured confided to their care.

The Baroness Philippe de Bourgoing, daughter of Monsieur Dolfus, of Mulhouse, whose husband was the Emperor's equerry, had taken charge of the linen—a colossal task, all the linen intended for the ambulances with the army having to be brought together, sorted, adapted, and distributed. One day, in the midst of her fatiguing and multifarious duties, she received word that her husband had been recognized among the *Cents Gardes*, who were marching in splendid procession at the head of the troops on their way to the front. The Baron Philippe de Bourgoing was deputy for the Nièvre, and he much regretted that he was not called upon to follow the Emperor to the war. Unknown to every one, therefore, and in order to be near the Emperor, to whom he had been attached for a great number of years, he enlisted in the *Cents Gardes* for the duration of the war, it being the invariable duty of this corps to form the Emperor's body-guard.

Madame de Bourgoing herself was ignorant of the step her husband had taken. He had kept it from her to save her from uneasiness, and knew that he could count upon her devotion and courage. On hearing the news, she ran to see her husband march past—he who had been dubbed at Court "the handsome Philippe" — and then returned with a sigh to her work.

The task of seeing that the ambulances were supplied with every necessary before being despatched to the battle-fields had fallen to Marshal Canrobert's wife. A complete set of attendants had to be provided for each vehicle ; bandages, dressings, medicaments, and the requisite utensils had to be looked out; the proper use and place assigned to everything, and all arranged beforehand. This lady was to be seen every day at the *Palais de l'Industrie*, in a modest gown of grey serge, but handsome as a queen; active, zealous, and inspecting and watching over all that was being done for the relief and welfare of our wounded.

Subsequently the Marshal's lady repaired to Metz to join her husband, and managed to get an entrance on the day of the capitulation. Here she found one of the ambulances which had been organized under her care. A Jewish lady, Madame Coralie Cahen, was at the head of this ambulance, and she had shown great courage and devotion all through the sad experiences of this lamentable siege. Her little carriage was present at each of the engagements of the 14th, 16th, and 18th of August, picking up the wounded and bringing aid to the dying, and she was the object of the veneration of the whole army. When Madame Canrobert arrived at Metz typhoid fever was raging among the soldiers, brought on by the labours and privations of the siege, and here Madame Cahen was displaying the same indefatigable zeal and devotion, and it was clear that this ambulance despatched by the Red Cross Society had rendered immense services to the army.

When it was decided to declare Paris in a state of siege, I entreated the Empress to allow me to remain with her. Our residence in the Aisne—the old abbey of Nogent, near Coucy-le-Château, and situated between Laon, La Fère, and Soissons—was in the line of invasion. Indeed the department of the Aisne was marked out as one of those which were to sustain the first shocks of the encounter. The plateau of Laon had been the centre of the military operations of the allied armies in 1814, and the spirits of the survivors of that epoch were excited at the thought of the deeds performed in that locality, terrorising the country and soaking the soil with blood.

A rumour was abroad that an entrenched camp of forty thousand men was going to be established at Laon, that the citadel was going to be armed and the town fortified; but there were no visible signs of such intentions.

At the beginning of August I went in attendance on the Empress, and she showed me a letter from M. Ferrand, Prefect of the Aisne, reporting to the Minister of the Interior that the temper of the population was warlike, and that the cannons of the citadel commanded the plain. Now I had on many occasions visited Laon, and I knew all about the cannons of the citadel. They were, in fact, rusting in the grass close to their broken carriages, only one of them being kept fit for use by the artillerymen, and that was to fire salutes on fête days. I thought it my duty to undeceive the Empress.

The inexplicable illusions of those whose duty it was to send information to the Government formed one of the most bitter disappointments of that period, and the very unpractical manner in which means of defence were being prepared is hardly credible. The old citadel of Coucy, whose majestic ruins command a view of the country and bear witness to its former strength, had been provided with a sort of barrier made of hurdles placed across the huge crenated gates, which could have been pushed aside by a child; and in certain communes men might have been seen going through their exercises with roughly-made imitation wooden muskets. Propositions were even made to fill the woods with snares and man-traps.

All sorts of childish fancies were indulged in. I remember one day a man coming to M. Carette and confiding to him with an air of great mystery that he had discovered an infallible means of sheltering our soldiers from bullets on the battle-field. He wanted a letter of introduction to the Minister of War, in order to lay his plan before him, and asked to be sent to him immediately. M. Carette thought he would ascertain something about the value of this wonderful discovery, and put men at his disposal to assist in bringing out the invention, wishing to test it for himself. The inventor returned two days later, carrying something carefully hidden from view ; it proved to be a long and narrow sheet-iron plate, to be fixed to the soldier's pouch and moved round to the direction from which the bullets came. He had provided himself with an infantry soldier's pouch, to which he attached his shield, and standing in front of M. Carette, who had a loaded carbine in his hand, urged him to fire at him, pretending that the mobility of the metal plate would cause the ball to rebound or glance off. M. Carette of course refused to try such a stupid experiment, and I fully believe that the man did not expect that he would do anything so imprudent. The pouch was, however, suspended from a tree, and fired at by M. Carette from a long distance. The bullet went through sheet-iron, pouch, and tree, and the inventor slunk away with a whole skin, but rather ashamed of himself. He was a stranger to the neighbourhood, and said he was a mechanic staying at Coucy to repair the church organ ;

but although he had papers with him all *en règle*, I have always suspected he was a German spy. If I narrate this trivial fact, it is only to show to what lengths the fantastic ideas which cropped up on every hand were indulged in.

M. Carette, who was greatly attached to the neighbourhood by old family ties, and had for a long time been mayor and member of the Council, had no idea of leaving home; but he feared that the events likely to transpire in that remote corner of the country, to which the enemy had just penetrated, might expose myself and the children to all the chances of war. He knew, too, that I was deeply attached to the Empress, and that I should consider it a happiness and an honour to be called to share her fortunes.

On the 12th of August I took my children—the eldest being scarcely three years of age—to stay with some relatives who had taken refuge at Dieppe. The painful scenes of families separating without knowing when they would meet again, the universal block and confusion on the railways, the excited crowds at the stations—everything that was said and seen — gave the semblance of delirium to all that was going on at that time. People acted under the influence of the prevailing excitement, as if they were in a sort of troubled dream, from which all real notions of life were absent.

Having placed my children in the hands of the relatives with whom they were to stay, I returned to Paris with a mind by no means easy, and asking myself whether they were not really two little orphans I was leaving behind. The position of the Empress was so sad, her grief so touching, and her courage so admirable, that by the side of her one found strength to stifle one's most natural feelings; and to me it was a duty and a consolation to prove my attachment to her by quitting all for her sake.

Paris had the appearance of a vast fair or market. Immense waggons of grain and fodder, droves of cattle, and flocks of sheep, were passing through the streets, to add to the supplies of victuals in the capital, and beasts were penned in the Bois de Boulogne and the Bois de Vincennes. Furniture-vans were removing goods from many of the houses, the inhabitants of which had decided to leave the city, and the dwellers in the outskirts were flocking within the circle of the fortifications. It was a difficult matter to find means of transport, even to those with plenty of money at their command; funeral hearses even were utilized for the carriage of furniture, and, the grotesque mingling promiscuously with the tragic, gaudy gew-gaws were in many cases being dragged away in funeral cars.

The Palace of the Tuileries was gloomy and deserted. Every year towards the end of June, usually just after the Grand Prix, the Court quitted Paris for several months; workmen would then come and take down the curtains and raise the carpets, and the furniture would remain covered up until the middle of December, when the Court returned from Compiègne. In the month of August, 1870, so sudden had been the arrival from Saint-Cloud, the apartments had not been set out with their accustomed elegance. The large drawing-rooms, with their grey canvas coverings, had an appearance of frigid melancholy, contrasting sharply with the splendid paintings and the rich ornamentation of the ceilings and panellings. All those small and familiar objects which go so far to make home-life agreeable had been removed. The flowers, too, of which as a rule there was great profusion, were now absent, and the stands and vases were empty and neglected.

Under the influence of the constant anxiety in which we lived, one's heart was painfully oppressed on entering any of these vast apartments, already, as it seemed, doomed to be deserted, and conversation went on in low tones, like those of a sick-chamber. In the Empress's private apartments, the green silk hangings and the pieces of furniture were covered in glazed chintz figured with large bunches of mauve-coloured iris. These bright coverings, however, although more pleasing to the eye than the common grey canvas of the other rooms, hardly seemed in keeping with the mahogany wainscotings, enriched with delicate chased work in gilded bronze, the *Louis Seize* furniture, the magnificent pictures, the bronzes, and rich works of art. But the Empress was given up entirely to her overwhelming duties, and would not permit that anything should be changed at such a time.

Her Majesty lived in a continual whirl of business, which even robbed her of sleep and rest. There were two or three Cabinet Councils every day, and communications from all branches of the public service, from the army, and from all the prefects, were continually arriving at the Tuileries; the Empress's study, in fact, was the centre towards which all information poured, and from which proceeded the orders for all the measures to be taken.

We very seldom saw the Empress, as she mostly took her meals alone, and hurriedly, while working in her study. A word, a gesture, a sign, between two open doors or between two business interviews; a feeble smile, with a broken-hearted look—that was nearly all the Empress vouchsafed to her intimate friends, unless sometimes she would make some mournful remark betraying the anguish of a riven soul.

A collision with the mob took place on the 17th of August in the Villette quarter, the first of a series of disturbances which drenched Paris with blood up to the time the Commune was let loose. The rising was instigated by several well-known members of the International. M. Blanqui was one of the most active spirits, and he afterwards claimed the honour of it. Writing in his journal *La Patrie en Danger*, on the 17th of September, 1870, he said:—"A month ago to-day, a hundred men came together stealthily on the Boulevard de la Villette, near the canal bridge. It was Sunday, and the sun was shining splendidly. A number of people walking up and down on the sidewalks concealed the fact that a crowd was forming. A juggler going through his performance a few paces from the firemen's barracks was the centre of a crowd of gazers amused by his tricks, and the leader of the intended movement, arrived on the spot before the other citizens engaged in the enterprise, instructed them as they came up to join the crowd around the acrobat. They were thus enabled to discuss and form their plans without raising the suspicions of the police. At about half-past three Blanqui gave the signal to muster, and they all walked slowly and quietly towards the firemen's barracks. They were going by a side walk, and had to descend into the main road to get to the guard-house. This sudden turn at right angles gave the alarm to the sentinel and to the men, who ran to fetch their rifles. It was a sad miscalculation! The Boulevard was now filled with insurgents, and they appealed in vain to the spectators with cries of 'Vive la Republique!' 'Death to the Prussians!' 'To arms!' No one replied by word or movement. . . . Citizen Pranger had given 18,000 francs to bring about this rising; it was all his fortune, and he did not reserve a centime for himself. . . . The principal authors of the Villette attack were chosen by themselves: they were Blanqui, Eudes, Granger, Pilho, and Flotte."

The above is contained in the report made by the Committee of Inquiry into the acts of the Government of National Defence, and signed by the Count Daru. The article passes over in silence the massacre of the firemen, those devoted guardians of the public safety, and of many inoffensive persons passing at the time, one of them quite a young girl.

The Opposition deputies hastened to repudiate this shameful crime. M. Gambetta, for instance, speaking in the Chamber, said:—"The Government has made no mistake this time in pointing to the authors of this criminal act, as they saw in it immediately the hand of Bismarck's agents. But the people, even before the Government, had discovered that the foreigner was mixed up with it, and proposed to deal with him themselves."

On that day all the barracks were empty, the last troops having left Paris for Châlons.

They were to form the 12th Corps under the command of General Trochu and the 13th under General Vinoy, the one amongst our Generals who gave the noblest example of military honour and patriotic self-abnegation. On the day following the disastrous affair of Champigny, when the hour for the capitulation of Paris had struck, General Trochu had given up the command of the army, reserving for himself, however, the post of President of the Government of National Defence. He would not have his name appear on the document rendering up the capital where for five months he had wielded civil and military power. Abdicating his functions of head of the army, therefore, he gave them over to General Vinoy, who manfully executed the painful task imposed upon him.

After the departure of the 12th and 13th Corps, the care of Paris was entrusted to a few brigades of policemen and of the National Guard, only in a state of semi-organization. It was not until later on that the contingent of sailors arrived in

Paris, who behaved so admirably all through the campaign.

Immediately on the outbreak of the Villette riot the Empress was informed of the circumstances, and was warned of the intention of the insurgents to march on the Tuileries, then guarded by only a feeble company of soldiers. General Mellinet, commander of the National Guard, was also made acquainted with the state of affairs, and came at once to the Empress and pointed out to her the dangers of the situation. The Empress received the news with the greatest calmness. "If they mean to come," she said, "we can do nothing to prevent them. Close the gates, however; at least they shall have the trouble of opening them." This was done, and a few well-planned measures of police sufficed to crush the revolutionary movement, and no assault on the Tuileries took place on that day.

# CHAPTER VIII.

The Emperor at Metz—Illness of the Prince Imperial—Arrival at the Camp of Châlons—State of the Troops in the Camp—Council of War—General Trochu, Governor of Paris—General Schmitz—General Favé—Interview between General Trochu and the Empress—"Breton, Catholic, and Soldier."

THE time spent by the Emperor at the Metz head-quarters was one of the most painful periods of his existence, chequered as it had been by so many and such various vicissitudes. The greatness and prosperity of France had been the one object of his life; and the glory of his dynasty—of that great name of Napoleon, the remembrance and the love of which he had kept alive in the hearts of the French people—had been his constant day-dream; and now all seemed to be crumbling to pieces under the weight of irreparable disaster. Acute bodily suffering, too, prevented him from taking the physical exercise so necessary for him, and to crown his sorrow he saw that his son, already so sensitive to the misfortunes crowding upon his country and his father, was showing signs of failing health.

The shock of repeated calamities had proved too much for a youth of such tender age, and had greatly affected the Prince's constitution. Every new disaster and every fresh disappointment was another blow to him, and he became a prey to a sort of feverish restlessness, which he sought to conceal from those around him. Its effects, however, became so visible that the Emperor could not help feeling great uneasiness. The Prince was constantly on the watch for information, and the efforts made to hide the bad news from him had to be relinquished, for he was clear-sighted enough to understand or guess at everything; and it only increased his anxiety when he found that a portion of the truth was being kept from him. He suffered from violent headaches, loss of appetite, and want of sleep, and was drooping visibly.

The Prince Imperial was in this condition when he left Metz, on the 16th of August, with his father. The Emperor arrived unexpectedly at Châlons, travelling in a third-class carriage, with its wooden seats, and squeezed up with the members of his staff. This was the only means of transport available.

He found the camp in a terrible state. It was no longer an army, but a mere mob of men who had escaped from slaughter—harassed, disbanded, and knowing neither leaders nor friends. They were the wretched remains of the last few fights, and crowds of dismounted cavalry-men, infantry without arms or baggage, artillery-men without guns, wandered aimlessly and dejected about the camp.

This was the state of things under which the Emperor revisited his soldiers—those splendidly-disciplined troops, the pride of their country and the envy of all Europe. But such deep discouragement and total abandonment of everything, he thought, could not but be temporary. After a little rest and active encouragement from their leaders these same men would find their valour again, and like brave heroes once more march to meet the foe, and be ready to the last man to act as their country's living ramparts, and save at least the honour of their arms.

The Emperor was shocked, however, at the utter want of organization. It was evident the troops would have to be allowed time to recover themselves. But all the same, the enemy was still advancing. Even there, at Châlons, a fresh engagement or some surprise was possible at any moment, and situated as it was in a large open plain, and on splendid ground for manœuvring, a few Prussian regiments, if they had fallen upon this multitude of disbanded troops, would have carried the camp without difficulty.

Considering the state in which the recent fights had left us, the Emperor could see that the essential point was to avoid fresh engagements, and, if possible, to take advantage of the interval at their disposal for rest and reorganization. The Emperor's idea was to withdraw to the neighbourhood of Paris, and, under the protection of the forts, entice the enemy into a dangerous position for an invading army, and then deliver a decisive battle with favourable chances of success; and afterwards to enter upon negotiations. The Emperor perceived clearly enough that to continue the campaign under existing conditions would be nothing but heroic madness, and that the only course to be adopted after the damage we had received was to spare France a hopeless struggle. He did not conceal from himself the fact that in acting thus he could not reckon upon the support of the nation. His intention was to abdicate after treating with the enemy, and as cargo is thrown overboard to save the lives of the crew of a ship in distress, he would sacrifice himself for his country. The Emperor's intentions, however, could not be carried out.

It was, unfortunately, at this very moment that a divergence of views arose between the Government and the heads of the army. Count Palikao, the new Minister of War, was of opinion that Marshal MacMahon should go to the aid of Bazaine, and that the two Marshals should then unite their forces to check the enemy and force him back.

The idea of bringing the army of Châlons to Paris and leaving Marshal Bazaine to his own resources had produced an unfavourable impression in Paris. How could any one cherish the notion of bringing home an army of 200,000 men, who might be better employed in stopping the advance of the enemy? Political considerations were also put forward. "They are pretorians," it was said, "who were being forced to give up the defence of the country, and were returning to serve as a retinue for the Emperor! Assistance must be sent to our glorious Bazaine at all costs."

In the report of M. de Saint-Marc de

Girardin on the Inquiry into the 4th of September events (page 143) we read:—"It was believed at the *Corps Législatif* that the Regency Government wished to bring the army back to Paris to take sides with the dynasty against the revolution."

Thus whilst some were accusing the Government of abandoning the defence of the country in order to protect the person of the Emperor from the insurgents, others attributed the Empress's opposition to her husband's return to Paris to considerations of personal ambition.

Amongst so many conflicting opinions and interests, what was the safest course to adopt? In the midst of so many expectations, uncertainties, and misapprehensions, the nation was soon reduced to terrible extremities, and unheard-of catastrophes occurred in the space of a few days.

On the morning of the day following his arrival at Châlons (the 17th of August) the Emperor summoned all the leaders of the army to a Council of War. It is interesting to preserve the exact features of this Council, at which matters of so much gravity were discussed, and the following is the description of it given by Marshal MacMahon in the course of an action brought by General Trochu against the *Figaro* (pages 113–114). Marshal MacMahon was examined as a witness in the case, and this was his evidence :—"I arrived at Châlons early on the 17th of August, and, at eight o'clock, the Emperor sent for me. I found him located at headquarters, and at that moment conversing with Prince Napoleon, General Trochu, and General Schmitz ; he had been, in fact, in consultation with them for some time. As I came up Prince Napoleon was telling the Emperor that he was fearful of a revolution in Paris, or at any rate a very pronounced movement in that direction, and he added that General Trochu, by virtue of his habits and antecedents, was the only man capable of checking a revolutionary movement. The Emperor appeared to be much astonished at first at what Prince Napoleon said, and, as far as I remember, did not answer him at once, but gave me a sign that he wished to speak to me. I followed him into the tent, and he there asked me what I thought of General Trochu. I told him I had known the General a long time, that he was a man of honour and integrity, and that the Emperor might place confidence in him—of that I was thoroughly convinced."

General Trochu had been brought into the Emperor's vicinity by Prince Napoleon. The Prince drew a striking picture of the state of the army, and dwelt upon the painful position of the Emperor, who, since he had given up the command-in-chief to Marshal Bazaine, had taken no part either in military matters or affairs of State.

General Schmitz, Chief of the Staff and a friend of General Trochu, supported Prince Napoleon's opinions, and remarked upon the wretched condition of the troops encamped at Châlons, and the ignorance in which they were respecting the fate of the army of Metz. "In my opinion," he said, "our only chance of safety is to get to

Paris. I have just passed through the capital, and people are saying there that you have not given General Trochu employment on account of the opposition sentiments attributed to him. Well, Sire, we must return to Paris, and General Trochu ought to be appointed governor of the city. Your present attitude cannot last."

"Yes," replied the Emperor. "It looks as if I had abdicated."

The Prince urgently pressed the Emperor to acquiesce in this arrangement. "If we must fall," he said, "let us at least fall like men. Think of General Trochu in Paris! You know his views on military concentration and organization, and the place would be defended to the last, and be made a basis for new operations. It is well known that he was opposed both to the present and the preceding wars — and that fact has compromised him. But he now possesses immense authority and popularity. Let him place them at your disposal like a brave man that he is, although wrongly judged by you. Appoint him Governor of

Paris, and entrust him with its defence. Let him get there a few hours before you, and announce your coming to the people by a proclamation which he will know how to draw up. You will see that all will go well" (pp. 95 and 96).

The Emperor listened attentively to this plan, which had been concocted in readiness to be laid before him, and, after having conferred a few minutes longer with the members of the Council, handed to General Trochu a decree investing him with the office of Governor of Paris, which had to be countersigned by the Minister of War. It was then agreed that the General should precede the Emperor and announce his coming to the inhabitants of Paris, but before setting out he urged that the Mobiles of the Seine who were at Châlons should be sent back. To this also the Emperor gave his sanction.

General Trochu left Châlons that day by special train, accompanied, among others, by General Schmitz, the Chief of his Staff, and General Favé of the Engineers, aide-de-camp to the Emperor, who was to assist in the operations of the siege; and these two officers occupied the same compartment as General Trochu on the journey to Paris. General Schmitz was one of the Emperor's old orderly officers, and was often received at Court, having always been a great favourite of the Emperor and Empress. He wrote frequently to the Empress during the China war, and kept her informed of the events of the campaign.

The suddenness with which our misfortunes had overtaken us, and the discouragement they wrought in the country, had filled with alarm our experienced military men and all those who attentively followed the course of political events. While General Trochu was writing out (with his knees for a table) his famous proclamation to the Parisians, General Schmitz was expressing to General Favé his fears for the future, and did not conceal his opinion that he looked upon the Empire as lost. "There is the future President of the Republic," he said, pointing to General

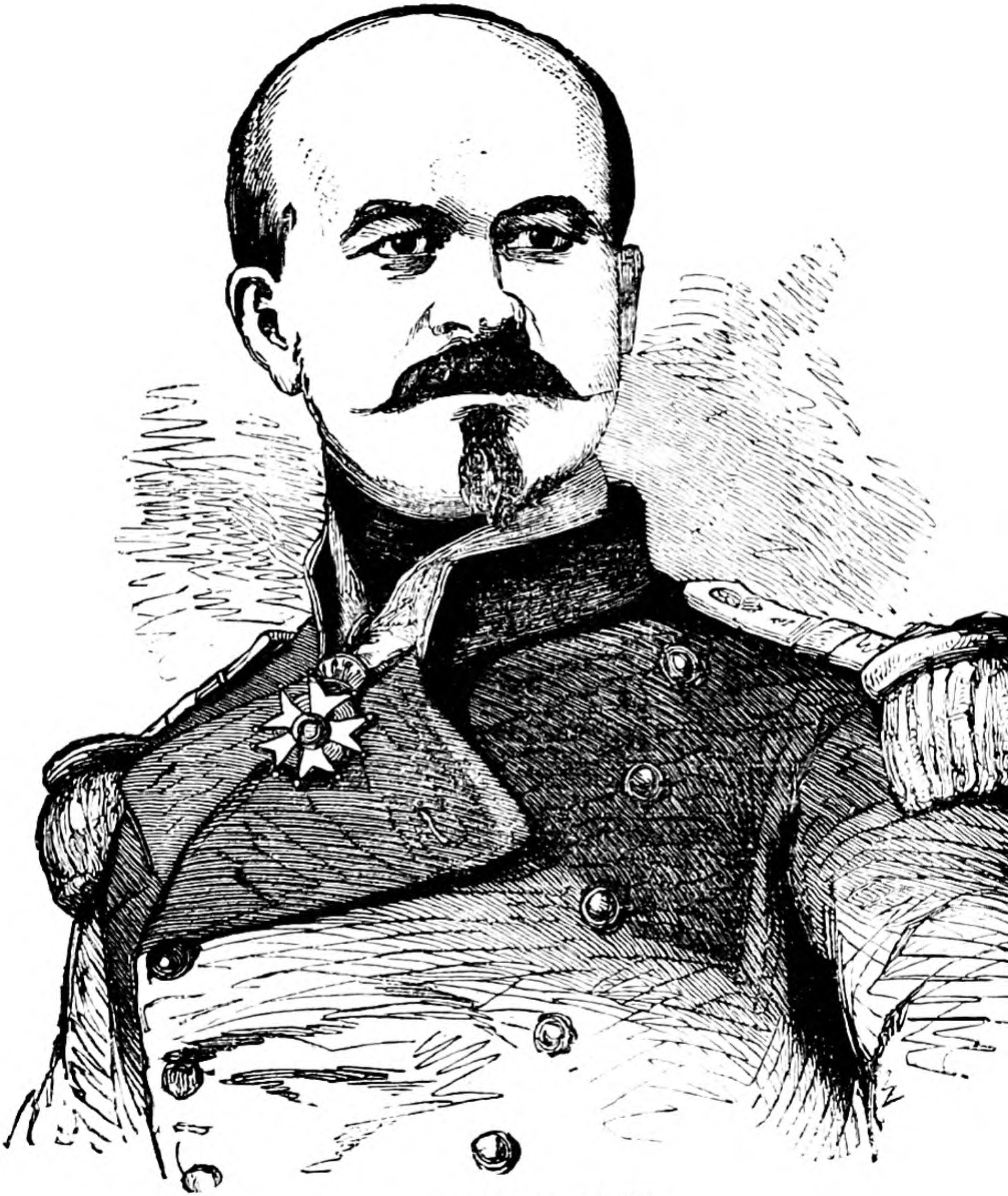
Trochu. General Favé, however, did not at that moment attach any importance to the remark.

In the course of conversation with General Favé, on one occasion, General Trochu made use of a very strange expression, coming as it did from a General in the army, whose mission was not exactly solely to kill men. Immediately after the 4th of September, when General Trochu had just realized so unexpectedly the intoxicating dream of supreme power, General Favé—the staunch friend of the Imperial family and a patriot before everything else—was still at his post, and while inspecting the fortifications one day with the Governor of Paris, he expressed his doubts of success and his fears for the future. "Just think, General," he said, "how many lives will be sacrificed around a city like Paris. Our enemies will have no difficulty in destroying it, with the formidable means of destruction at their disposal."

Now General Trochu, who was President of the Council of Morbihan, had a great taste for agriculture, and occupied his leisure time in farming. To the remark of General Favé he coolly replied: "They will enrich the soil for future generations, General." And the arming of the forts was pushed on with energy.

The political side of the part General Trochu was called upon to play from the moment of his appointment to the governorship, appears to have had a great effect upon his character. He was going to face a nervous, restless populace, excited and exasperated by terrible disasters, and in whom was awakening that revolutionary spirit which had been slumbering for eighteen years. To keep the Parisians quiet was perhaps a more subtle problem for him than to undertake the defence of the city, and traces of the concern he felt on this score may be found in his numerous and prolix proclamations with which the walls of Paris were placarded all through the siege. Appeals to arms, appeals to the courage, goodwill, and co-operation of the inhabitants, followed each other in rapid succession; and perhaps General Trochu would have been better inspired if he had only appealed to himself, and if he had applied his mind to simple matters of defence, and made the best use of the resources at his disposal, and of the courage, devotion, and self-denial manifested by the majority of the people in Paris. If he had been as mindful of his duty as a soldier in the face of the revolution as he had been in the face of the foreign foe, he might perhaps have had the happiness and glory of sparing his country the infliction of incalculable evils.

General Trochu went to the Minister of the Interior as soon as he arrived in Paris, and showed him the powers with which the Emperor had invested him, and notwithstanding the advanced hour (it was half-past one in the morning) he begged M. Henri Chevreau to conduct him at once to the Empress. They therefore proceeded to the Tuileries, and the Empress gave them audience immediately. The General explained to her the military situation, which appeared to him very critical, and added



GENERAL TROCHU.

that the presence of the Emperor with the army created a difficult position for everybody. Indeed, although the Emperor, after having retired from the command, had declared that he intended to share the fate of his soldiers, the mere fact of his presence was enough to cramp the commander-in-chief's initiative.

The Empress then laid before General Trochu the reasons which operated against the return of the Emperor to Paris, and informed him that only a few days before, the same proposal had been the subject of disagreement beween herself and M. Emile Ollivier.

During the interview, which lasted far towards morning, the Regent explained the political side of the question, to which the General was a stranger, and under the new light thus thrown upon it the conditions under which he had accepted command appeared to be somewhat modified. He at last yielded to the Empress's reasoning, and came to the conclusion that it would be better to postpone the Emperor's return.

The General afterwards relied upon this change of views to explain the cause of his defection. The conditions attaching to the assistance he had promised to the Emperor at Châlons had not, he said, been carried out. He had accepted the post of Governor of Paris on the understanding that the Emperor and Marshal MacMahon's army would join him in Paris. But if a change of plan appeared to him to be prejudicial to a successful defence, why did he acquiesce in it? The Empress distinctly declared that she should strongly object to the return of the Emperor, and that the Cabinet and the whole Council of Regency supported her in her objections. Why, then, did not General Trochu immediately declare that under those new conditions he could not accept the responsibility of governing Paris? It was not generally known, as yet, that he had been appointed. He had arrived in the middle of the night, and with the exception of a few members of the Government, no one in Paris knew of his return. A refusal, therefore, would not have made any stir; and the General might have returned to Châlons and informed the Emperor of the divergence of views existing between himself and the Government, and then, resuming the command of the 12th Corps, he would have come off with only the trouble of the journey to Paris and back.

General Trochu, however, had no idea of withdrawing, but on the contrary asked that the Emperor's decree appointing him Governor of Paris should be immediately countersigned by the Minister of War, in order that it should acquire the force of law. The Cabinet, however, had to meet in the morning, and it was proposed that the General should wait until then; but to this he replied that he could permit of no delay, and the Empress therefore, at his request, asked M. Henri Chevreau to go at once to General Palikao and get his signature to the Emperor's letter. During the absence of the Minister of the Interior, General Trochu kept the Empress in conversation (notwithstanding the fact that she was greatly fatigued), and presently the decree was brought back duly signed and legalized.

All the incidents of this interview have been reported at length in the course of the celebrated action brought by General Trochu against M. de Villemessant in consequence of articles published in the *Figaro*. They appeared to be insulting to the General, and although the statements made were for the most part truthful, they certainly did contain many offensive expressions. The following was the opinion uttered by the *Figaro* on the 27th of January, 1872, of the General's conduct during the time he filled the post of Governor of Paris: "I shall not pronounce sentence myself. It has been drawn up in two stinging expressions which I will simply copy. The first one is by General Changarnier: 'He is Tartuffe, wearing the helmet of Mangin.' The second is not so picturesque, but it does not sting the less, and is the saying of Marshal MacMahon before the Committee of Inquiry: 'I believed him to be an honest man.'—Minos."

General Changarnier's evidence given in the court of law respecting the language he had used, is a masterpiece of ingenuity, caution, and military frankness. Admiral Jurien de la Gravière was also questioned by M. Allou, who defended General Trochu, on the subject of the interview which took place on the night of the 17th and 18th of August between the Empress and the General, and the circumstances under which the interview had come about. The Admiral's reply was as follows: "My recollection is very clear as to this affair. It was about three o'clock in the morning, and I was in bed, when Lieutenant Conneau, one of the Emperor's orderly officers, came and knocked me up. The Lieutenant was greatly agitated, and informed me that General Trochu was bringing the Emperor back to Paris. I was very much upset by this news, because it was our opinion that the Emperor ought not to leave the army, and that if he came to Paris it would be at the peril not only of his life but of his reputation. The Empress wished to see me, and I went to her. It was a moving scene. General Trochu was very dignified, I must say, and maintained his right to advise, as he had done, the return to Paris, because, according to him, the camp at Châlons was nothing but a pleasure camp, where the Emperor was exposed to the risk of being captured by a division of the enemy's cavalry. The Empress then said to the General: 'There is one despatch that you are *not* aware of—we have just received it from Marshal Bazaine—saying that the Marshal has gained the day at Rezonville, and that they have heard of the great battle of the 16th of August.' On hearing this, General Trochu agreed that it was no longer necessary that the Emperor should return to Paris, and I was very glad he had yielded."

Almost as soon as the new Governor of Paris had entered upon his duties, disagreements arose between him and the new Minister of War. General Palikao was an energetic man of action, and prompt in his decisions, and he chafed at the red-tapeism insisted upon by General Trochu in all matters where common action was necessary. Nevertheless, every time the Ministers had to deal with any military question, or with any other matter connected with his office—and this happened almost daily in a town in a state of siege—the General was invited to take part in the deliberations of the Council. If his presence was somewhat dreaded, it was because of the loss of time his long speeches entailed, at a moment when prompt action was of the first necessity. Whenever General Trochu got up to speak, even on matters of trivial importance, he would spin out his remarks to an interminable length, and wander off into matters entirely foreign to the subject. This was very tiring to his colleagues, but the Empress, desirous of treating him with consideration, listened to him with the greatest patience, finding, however, some difficulty in exacting the same amount of resignation from the other members of the Council, the Minister of War especially.

The General's eloquence was so natural to him, that he did not think of placing any stint upon it; and not being conscious of wearying his audience, the irritation depicted on some of their countenances he set down to ill-will. The Empress would often detain him for a few moments and talk to him of her troubles, and do her best to remove the disagreeable impressions he could not help betraying, even while making protestations of the most exalted devotion.

It was at one of these interviews that the General remarked in a free and easy way to the Regent: "Madame, if your police arrangements are perfect, you must have heard that the Governor of Paris is plotting." And he went on to explain that he had judged it to be a good policy to place himself in communication with the opponents of the Government with the object of conciliating them and bringing about an arrangement.

The Empress replied that she placed

every confidence in the word of a soldier; that in accepting the office which the Emperor had bestowed upon him he had undertaken to uphold the Government, and that she counted upon him. It was in answer to this that the General, putting one knee to the ground, uttered the sentence since become so famous: " Madame, I am a Breton, a catholic, and a soldier, and I will serve you to the death." This theatrical effusion was rather embarrassing to the Empress, and she put out her hand to raise him up, when he seized upon it and passionately kissed it, and then hastily withdrew.

The Empress quitted her study for a moment and came towards us, her countenance bearing that terrible worn-out expression which always came over her when she left her work for a moment. She sat down and told us that the Council had just broken up, and that General Trochu had been more tedious than ever. And then she described to us the scene which had just taken place.

"An honest man," she added, "has no need of such a flood of words to express his readiness to do his duty;" and as she spoke, her Majesty rubbed the back of her hand with a sort of repugnance, as if to wipe off all traces of the kiss.

Treason was already stalking around her.

# CHAPTER IX.

Last Days of the Fighting—Bazeilles and Sedan—Letter from General Pajol—The Emperor a Prisoner—Interview with M. de Bismarck—Interview with the King of Prussia—Departure of the Emperor—Wilhelmshohe—The Emperor and the Queen Hortense—A saying of the Emperor at Chislehurst.

WHILE active preparations were being made for a siege, and guns were being mounted on the fortifications, the *Corps Législatif* went on discussing all the measures taken by the Government, and criticising every movement of the army.

M. Thiers, always very active and very restless, was appointed a member of the Defence Committee. Houses were pulled down within the military zone, and the moat was filled with water. On all hands was displayed a feverish patriotism; the clash of arms was incessant; soldiers arrived and soldiers departed; wounded men were being brought in, and the warlike preparations were prodigious. That was the aspect of Paris.

The National Guard was being hastily organized, at the urgent demand of the Deputies of the Left, and it was placed under the command of General Mellinet; and in the departments, too, all able-bodied men were summoned, with whatever arms they could get hold of, to enrol themselves in the active army and enjoy the privileges attaching to that position.

General Wimpffen, on his arrival from Algeria towards the end of August, issued a proclamation to the inhabitants of his own department, that of the Aisne, to stimulate them to resistance. "Let every hedge," he said, "every ditch, every house, serve as ramparts for you." Poor things to rely upon, forsooth, to stop the advance of armies who were spreading all over the country, and having at their command the most formidable means of destruction.

The greatest uncertainty reigned respecting the doings of the army. The sole topic discussed was the junction of MacMahon with " our glorious Bazaine," this being the epithet invariably applied to the Marshal from that time down to the fall of Metz.

News came that the frontier was in flames; that Strasbourg — the home of Kléber!—was partially in ruins; that its library was destroyed, one of its churches demolished, and its cathedral—one of the wonders of the world—damaged. A cry of anguish went up, and all France bled at the thought of the sufferings borne by the vanguard of the French army. Nevertheless the war-loan voted by the Chambers was subscribed several times over. The doors at the Ministry of Finance, besieged by a crowd overnight, were opened at nine o'clock on the morning of the 23rd of August, and when they were closed at five o'clock in the evening a hundred and seventy million francs had been subscribed!

Marshal MacMahon's conduct has been

explained in various military works that have been published.

It is known that, after leaving Châlons to fall back upon Rheims, the Marshal wished to lead his army eastward again, and effect a junction with the army of Metz, drawing his troops towards the defiles of the Argonne—and this in spite of the Emperor's advice, who, as the Marshal himself confessed, did not cease to urge a retreat on Paris. After marching and counter-marching, fighting several battles and sustaining many defeats, Marshal MacMahon's army was at last completely routed, and by the 30th of August we had nothing between us and the enemy but a narrow strip of country shorn of all defence. The greatest prodigies of valour, therefore, could not save us or Paris from annihilation.

At eleven o'clock in the evening of the 31st the Emperor and his staff entered Sedan, in the midst of frightful confusion. It was a very small place, and the troops were crowding into it, and being close to the Belgian frontier, thousands of men unconsciously crossed over during that fatal night. Sedan was a fortified place belonging to a past age, possessing neither armament nor supplies; and being exposed on all sides to the attacks of the enemy, it was a sorry refuge for such a number of men worn out by the fights of the past few days.

Surrounded by his officers, a prey to the deepest anguish, cast down by fatigue and suffering, the Emperor had to dismount and make his way on foot through narrow streets encumbered with soldiers, guns, and vehicles of all kinds in inextricable confusion, rendering progress on horseback impossible.

The Prince Imperial had meantime passed into Belgium, and there, at the house of the Prince de Chimay, he received tender nursing, and obtained the quiet and repose so necessary for him after his recent rough experience.

The Emperor sat up the whole of the night preceding the last of the sanguinary and desperate fights, in which our men displayed so much heroism in vain. He was quite aware of the extent of our disasters, and death on the field of battle in the midst of his troops, and a soldier's burial with his flag for a winding-sheet, was his devout wish, and the one vision which comforted him through this anxious night.

At a very early hour the Emperor appeared on the battle-field of Bazeilles, where a terrible and gallant struggle had taken place between the marines, under the command of General de Vassoigne, and a Bavarian corps. On his way he met Marshal MacMahon being carried off severely wounded, and exchanged a few words with him. The Marshal had exposed himself with heroic recklessness, and when one of his aides-de-camp called his attention to the fact that he was imprudently approaching too near the enemy's lines, he replied, "That is always the way on fighting-days," and he kept his horse at a canter in the midst of the firing, until he was struck by a shell.

It was now seven o'clock in the morning, and the Emperor was informed that the command had been made over to General Ducrot. His Majesty continued his course in order to be as near as possible to the line of fighting, and, with the officers who accompanied him, soon became a target for the Prussian artillery. The Emperor, therefore, ordered his escort to withdraw, not wishing to unnecessarily expose them to the fire, but he himself continued his way towards the front, having with him none but General Pajol, Count Davilliers, and Captain d'Hendecourt, the latter being shortly after killed at his side.

The first thing done by General Ducrot after receiving the command, was to order a retreat upon Mézières, and the order was being put into execution when General Wimpffen, arrived from Algeria only two days previous and quite ignorant both of the state of the army and of the plan of action, demanded from General Ducrot that the command should be delivered up to him. He was, in fact, the oldest commanding officer in the army, and on his way through Paris he had been careful to bring his claims before the Minister of War, obtaining from that functionary a letter, conferring upon him the right of replacing Marshal MacMahon in case the latter should be prevented from continuing the command; and this contingency had just arisen by reason of the Marshal's wound.

At half-past eight o'clock, therefore, General Wimpffen took command, and immediately declared that he should resume the offensive. Accordingly he countermanded the order for retreat, already in full execution, and in spite of the objections of General Ducrot, who implored him not to attempt such a feat against the wishes of the Emperor. The Emperor also, who shared the views of General Drucot, strove to dissuade General Wimpffen from his purpose, but in vain. "Your Majesty may be quite at ease," he said; "in two hours I shall have driven them all into the Meuse" ("Sedan," by General Ducrot, p. 32).

Nevertheless, in spite of the most heroic efforts, swarms of German troops outflanked us on every side, and crowned the surrounding hills with an impenetrable ring of artillery.

At ten o'clock the Emperor dismounted, and slowly, silently, and unmoved, walked along amid a hail of bullets. Two of his officers, General de Courson and Captain de Trécesson, fell at his side, and the bombshells burst beneath his feet, and covered him with smoke and dirt. But he remained unhurt through all; and the death he sought did not come to deliver him.

At about half-past eleven the defeat was changed into a rout, and from that moment the battle was lost, more than thirty thousand disbanded men rushing pell-mell into Sedan, where they became packed together in the narrow streets.

The most authentic details of this disastrous affair are to be gathered from a letter by General Pajol, published in the *Moniteur* of the 22nd of July, 1871. The General, who had been constantly near the Emperor throughout the day, says:—

"As early as eleven o'clock in the morning the Emperor had formed an estimate of the real state of things. For five hours he had been in the thickest of the fight and exposed to the cross-fire of the artillery, the bullets falling thick around him and his staff, General de Courson and Captain de Trécesson being severely wounded in close vicinity to him. When the infantry retreated they forced him back, so to speak, against the walls of the place, and when, at half-past eleven, he managed to get through, more than thirty thousand men were packed together in the streets in the direst confusion. Shells were falling in the midst of them as on a field of battle, and making the same havoc, and on the bridge a bomb burst within two paces of the Emperor, killing two horses by his side. It is a marvel how he was not killed at that spot.

"The Emperor then made his way to the side of the Marshal, and would have mounted his horse again, but the block was so great that he had to relinquish his purpose, and waited at the sub-Prefecture for the end of the tragedy which was unfolding itself before him. Presently the commanders of the different corps arrived, and declared that their men had been forced back into the streets of the town in disorder, and that resistance had become impossible. All, therefore, agreed that a stop should be put to the carnage by hoisting a flag of truce. General Pellé, who voted next day against the capitulation, also came, and addressed to the Emperor these words, which I shall never forget: 'Sire, I am only a soldier, and I would be glad to save your Majesty; but you cannot now go beyond the fortifications; any such attempt would be futile.' The Emperor replied that he did not intend to sacrifice the life of a single soldier to save his own person, and that he had made up his mind to share the fate of the army. After having closely questioned the general officers upon the state of things, the Emperor despatched General Lebrun to General de Wimpffen, advising him to demand an armistice, as it was useless to continue the fight; and it was then that General de

Wimpffen, meeting General Lebrun on his way to find him, proposed to him that a passage should be cut through the German masses. The two Generals, therefore, drawing their swords and gathering around them a few scattered remnants of the troops still imbued with the honour and courage of soldiers, advanced resolutely towards one side of the battle-field. They had about two thousand men around them, but after going for some distance the Commander-in-chief looked round, and found that his men were not following him. The two Generals had therefore to retrace their steps, and General Lebrun, whose *corps-d'armée* had heroically borne the burden of the day in their efforts to instil a little order into the defeat, was the last man to enter Sedan, after being thirteen hours on the field of battle. After waiting an hour," continues General Pajol, "a long hour as it seemed, during which our men kept on falling under a concentrated fire, to which the French artillery did not even reply—and no answer having arrived, the Emperor ordered the white flag to be hoisted on the citadel. The King of Prussia immediately sent one of his aides-de-camp to demand the surrender of the place ; and the Emperor, with the idea that by delivering up his person he might obtain better conditions for the army and for France, sent in turn an aide-de-camp to King William, saying that he delivered up his sword into his hands. Next day a council of war was held, under the presidency of General de Wimpffen, and attended by thirty general officers, and it was agreed that a capitulation was inevitable. Only two generals voted against that measure, but it is not for me to inquire into their motives for doing so. What I wish to state —because that statement is the truth—is that the Emperor remained entirely ignorant of the strategical reasons which had brought the army from Châlons to Mouzon, and from Mouzon to Sedan. It is unjust to hold Napoleon III. responsible, in a military sense, for the capitulation of Sedan, because the Marshal had been left to do as he liked. The person of the Emperor has been fatally connected with the wreck of our army. All he could do, however, was to try and save the crew of the ship of which he was no longer captain; and this is what he did, by ordering the white flag to be hoisted at three o'clock. Half-an-hour later, no doubt, it would have been hoisted at the command of one or other of the Generals, but by that time several thousands more of soldiers would have perished. It is part of the logic of events, perhaps, that politicians have tried to throw all the responsibility for Sedan upon the Emperor—although they would certainly have contested with him the honour of a victory—but it is interesting to note what Marshal MacMahon said in October last, in a letter to the Emperor, dated from Pouru-aux-Bois. The Marshal's loyal character and noble simplicity are well known, and these are his words: 'The Emperor may be persuaded that I shall never, with a view to screen myself, distort the truth with reference to the events of which I was witness in the last campaign.' These words do honour to the Duke de Magenta, and leaves to each one the responsibility of his own acts. That is the true history, my dear friend, of this sad day. I have been very temperate in my details, and, as I wished to keep within the truth, I have only stated what I saw. You know me well enough to feel sure that I would not trifle with honour, and that what I write I am not ashamed to sign.

"Your friend,

"GENERAL V. PAJOL.

"*July* 16, 1871."

Colonel Bronsart was the officer who came to Sedan under a flag of truce to summon the citadel to surrender. He was conducted to the sub-Prefecture, and here the Emperor referred him to the General commanding-in-chief to arrange for the capitulation, and informed him at the same time that he had written to the King of Prussia to say that he considered himself his prisoner.

Having finished his business with General de Wimpffen, Colonel Bronsart accompanied

General Reille, the Emperor's envoy, to the King of Prussia. Up to that time the King had not been aware of the Emperor's presence at Sedan, and on hearing the message he was deeply moved; and replied that he accepted the Emperor's sword, and appointed Marshal de Moltke to negotiate for the surrender of the place.

General de Wimpffen and the plenipotentiaries met at Donchéry to discuss the terms of capitulation; and on his return at two o'clock in the morning, the General came to speak with the Emperor, who had requested that the army should not be made prisoners, but should be allowed to pass into Belgium. On being informed that this clause had been struck out of the conditions, the Emperor resolved to go himself to confer with the King of Prussia direct, in the hope of obtaining easier terms.

The Emperor therefore left Sedan at six o'clock in the morning and went to Donchéry, where he thought to meet the King, but head-quarters had been removed the night before to Vendresse, a few kilomètres further. M. de Bismarck, however, had remained at Donchéry, and when he learnt from General Reille that the Emperor was coming, he went to meet him. When about half the distance, he met the carriage in which the Emperor was travelling with three officers, escorted by Generals Castlenau and De la Moskowa, one on each side, on horseback.

M. de Bismarck dismounted, and the Emperor asked him where he could see King William to confer with him on military matters. M. de Bismarck replied that he did not know the King's intentions with respect to such a conference, and invited the Emperor to stop at the house where he himself had passed the night. It was the dwelling of a working weaver, and the only furniture it contained was a table and two chairs.

While the Emperor was acquainting the Chancellor with his desire of obtaining from the King honourable conditions for the army, M. de Bismarck attempted to glean from him the bases on which it would be possible to treat for peace. The Emperor, however, declared, that as he was a prisoner of war, it would rest with the Regency Government to take steps in that direction. Doubtless Marshal de Moltke had been notified of the Emperor's presence at Donchéry, and at this moment he put in an appearance, and the Emperor mentioned to him his desire to obtain permission for the troops to lay down their arms in Belgium. Once more the Marshal peremptorily refused to listen to such a proposition, and then left to inform the King of the Emperor's arrival. His Majesty then went outside the cottage, and seating himself upon a bench continued his conversation with M. de Bismarck.

In a short time word was brought to the Emperor that King William would receive him at the Château de Bellevue, and getting into his carriage he gave the order to drive to the Château. The King met him in the park, having at his side the Crown Prince and some other German princes whom the Emperor had received at the Tuileries. Then dismounting, the Emperor saluted the

King, and the two monarchs entered the Château together, where they had a conference at which no witnesses were present.

Writing to Queen Augusta, after this interview, the King of Prussia said: "I cannot describe the effect produced upon me by the sight of the Emperor, whom, only three years ago, I had seen at the very summit of power."

The interview only lasted a quarter of an hour, and then the Emperor retired.

Napoleon III. never returned to Sedan. The King of Prussia had placed at his disposal as a residence the castle of Wilhelmshohe, in the neighbourhood of Cassel. The Emperor bowed, and went off immediately into exile—that exile that had no end.

Before leaving Sedan, the Emperor had ordered the keeper of his purse, M. Thélin, to distribute money among the soldiers about to be sent into Germany, in order, to some extent, to soften their misery. There were about a million francs remaining in the privy purse, and the whole of this sum was given out to the soldiers. This is why M.

Thélin was in Paris on the 4th of September, he having gone there in search of funds, the Emperor finding himself quite destitute.

On crossing the frontier the Emperor overtook the first convoy of prisoners on their way to captivity, and the poor fellows greeted him once more with their cheers. Nothing could have been more cruel than the circumstances under which this journey into Germany was accomplished, and those who accompanied the Emperor were unable to restrain their pity.

Napoleon III. found some vague reminiscences of his childhood when he arrived at Wilhelmshohe. It was, in fact, a country seat once belonging to King Jérome, where, when quite an infant, he had come with Queen Hortense to pay a visit to his uncle, and to his aunt the Princess Catherine of Wurtemberg.

This little palace, belonging to the time when Versailles was in its glory, resembled most of the other castles beyond the Rhine built by the Germans, who sought to imitate the taste of the Grand Monarque. It had now become the property of the Grand Duke of Hesse, and no alteration had been made in it for a long time.

Those who were watching the Emperor with restless solicitude heard him on the first night of his arrival walking slowly up and down his room; and next morning they found the august prisoner broken and dejected, and grown older by twenty years. On his way through the apartments, surrounded by those who had begged as a favour the honour of accompanying their unfortunate sovereign, the Emperor passed into a gallery hung with numerous pictures. One of these, a portrait on a large scale, lighted up by a ray of sunshine, attracted his attention, and uttering an exclamation of surprise, he started back as if struck by an illusion of fancy. He recognized the likeness of his mother. There were the sweet and delicate features of Queen Hortense, like a smiling apparition, in all the glow of her youth and beauty, and she seemed to be coming forward to meet her unlucky son. The Emperor made a sign to those who were following him, and they instantly retired, and letting fall a heavy curtain behind them, left the Emperor alone.

When he reappeared his eyes were dimmed with tears, and bore traces of the emotion his stricken soul had undergone. His features, however, had lost their painful contraction, and had assumed that expression of firmness, dignity, and august benevolence with which those who had the honour of being near him in the latter part of his life were so well acquainted.

Napoleon III. has been reproached for coming out of the battle of Sedan alive. He has been reproached for not having yielded to the persuasion of General de Wimpffen to attempt to cut his way through at the head of as many men as were still in a condition to fight. But if MacMahon's army had not surrendered, if the slightest inclination had been shown to continue the struggle, then all who were in the town—men, women, and children—and all the troops huddled together in the neighbourhood, would surely have been annihilated.

In view, however, of the mutual jealousies of generals, casting upon each other the responsibility of defeat; and in face of the impotent heroism of our decimated troops, the Emperor could see that it was no longer possible to hope that the sacrifice of so many brave fellows could be of any use to France, and he understood the time had come to play his part as father of his people, and set himself above all other authority. At this moment he wielded the power of life or death over more than fifty thousand men. If he had swerved from his most sacred duty as a monarch—that of sparing the blood of his subjects when it would only flow uselessly; if, not being able to save them along with himself, he had given them over to the slaughter being prepared for by the enemy, without any consideration of humanity to crown his triumph—with what reproaches would not his memory have been assailed? A few heroic individuals might perhaps have survived the iron embrace of

M. de Moltke's cannons, but the army as a whole, and the entire population with it, would have been inevitably given over to destruction. All this, indeed, comes out clear from official reports emanating from both sides, from all inquiries that have been instituted, and from various statements made.

It was the wish of Napoleon III. that the last hour of his reign should be marked by an act of humanity.

One day at Chislehurst, when friends were urging the Emperor to invoke the memory of past benefits and confound some of those who appeared to cast slurs upon his character, he replied in this sentence full of gentleness and forgiveness :—

"After so many disasters, it is impossible to be just."

# CHAPTER X.

The 4th of September—The Irreconcilables—Excitement in Paris—Despatch from the Emperor after Sedan—Thiers and Mérimée—The Marquis de Castelbajac—Marshal Canrobert's Wife and M. Rouher—Night Sitting—The Déchéance—Meeting in the Rue de la Sourdière—The Governor of Paris sleeps—Saying of General Trochu—A Mayor of Paris—The Friends of the Last Hour—Interview of the Empress with a Deputation from the Chamber—Her Attitude—The Ministers—Invasion of the Tuileries—The Empress yields—Metternich and Nigra—The Adieux—Invasion of the Carrousel—Departure—Doctor Evans—Embarkation at Deauville—The Storm.

IF we are to believe the testimony of many public men in a position to form opinions respecting the tendency of events, the catastrophe of the 4th of September would appear to have been inevitable from the very commencement of our disasters. The defeat of our armies naturally shook the whole fabric of the Empire, bound up, as it had been from the beginning of the century, with the prosperity of France.

What will be the ultimate results of the passions yielded to by those who did not hesitate to let loose revolution in the face of the enemy, in the hope of subverting a hated *régime*; what has been, for themselves, the consequences of their own acts—are questions to which the future of France will find a reply; and history will certainly place its mark upon some of those men who, rising up suddenly from mediocrity, seized upon power with the object of setting their country in flames.

The eagerness with which the group of irreconcilables in the Chamber—that is, about fifty of the deputies—clamoured for the arming of the National Guard, is a fact not to be forgotten. What interests had they to serve in pressing for the adoption of this measure? When the siege of Paris had become imminent, did not the Opposition deputies loudly declare that the artisans of the *faubourgs* would not fight for the Empire?

When war was declared, M. Ernest Picard, one of the leaders of the irreconcilables, was walking and talking in the Tuileries gardens with M. Riché, sectional President of the Council of State. They were discussing coming events, and presently M. Ernest Picard, shaking his fist at the windows of the Emperor's study, said: "That d—d fellow there has such good luck, that he is quite capable of coming off victorious, and then we shall be sat upon."

This elegant remark was repeated by M. Riché himself to M. Godelle, former deputy for Paris, who alluded to it at a public meeting during the elections of 1879. Quite recently, too, M. Paul Déroulède has recalled the fact that at the time of the misfortunes which befell us previous to the 4th of September, he heard M. Jules Ferry make use of the expression: "At last the Imperial armies are beaten!"

The real feeling which pervaded the minds of the enemies of the Empire when war was declared was divulged by M. de

Kératry at a meeting held at Nantes in 1871. In his speech there delivered M. de Kératry said: "Three weeks before the 4th of September I hastened to Paris to draw up the proclamation of the Republic, and on the night of the 3rd–4th September I was doing all I could to hasten the overthrow of the Emperor. I thrust Gambetta into the tribune; and on the 4th of September I took possession of the prefecture of police, the prefecture of the Seine. That is what I have done!"

The suddenness with which the Emperor's enemies acted as soon as the catastrophe of Sedan became known, is quite enough to prove the way in which they intended to carry out their ideas while taking advantage of the country's misfortunes. There had been a short interval of hope between Fröschwiller and Sedan, at the time when the junction of MacMahon and Bazaine was looked forward to. But so far from that being effected, Marshal Bazaine's army was locked up at Metz, and and in the meantime the army of Prince

Frederick Charles, after having beaten Bazaine's troops, was making forced marches to join the Crown Prince of Prussia at Sedan.

On the 2nd of September the alarming news was circulating in official circles that a great battle had been fought in which Marshal MacMahon was seriously wounded, and it was even stated that his life was in danger. At about five o'clock on that day, M. de Vougy, Director of Telegraphs, brought to the Empress a despatch from the Emperor announcing that Sedan had capitulated, and that he himself was a prisoner. The message contained the following words: "After seeking death vainly in the midst of my soldiers, I have been obliged to constitute myself a prisoner in order to save the army."

Only those who have lost all that life is worth living for, can form any idea of the Empress's state of mind at this moment, seeing before her, as she did, the abyss into which France was about to fall, threatened both by revolution and defeat. The disasters which had befallen the country were rising up against those who were holding the reins of power, and it was a question whether, in a situation so compromised, the Government would retain sufficient authority to obtain an honourable peace. This was the sole preoccupation of the Empress's mind.

The Emperor being now a captive, the Empress became desirous of winning over all the men, of whatever shade of opinion, whose co-operation could be useful to the country, and with this view she begged M. Mérimée to see M. Thiers and sound him as to his disposition towards the Government.

All those who had raised their voices against a declaration of war were by this time looked upon as prophets, and M. Thiers, for one, had gained popularity from our defeats. He might be at this moment disposed towards a reconciliation; at any rate, the Empress thought there was room for hope in that direction, after the way in which he had recently approached the Emperor through the Duchess de Mouchy.

M. Mérimée thereupon had an interview with his colleague of the Academy, and explained to him what services he could render the country by opening a way for reconciliation, cleverly expatiating upon the important part M. Thiers might be called upon to play, the Emperor being prisoner.

"No," replied M. Thiers, "after Sedan there is nothing to be done, absolutely nothing."

M. Mérimée nevertheless endeavoured to learn what M. Thiers would be inclined to advise, but he said he had no advice to give, and for the first time in his life entrenched himself in silence.

In a letter to his friend M. Panizzi, dated the 22nd of August, M. Mérimée writes: "I have seen the Empress; her conduct is truly saintly, and worthy of all admiration." And writing again a few days later he says: "Whatever happens, this country is in a very bad state, and, to use the Empress's words, the army which M. de Bismarck has in Paris is the most to be feared of any."

Three weeks after this, M. de Mérimée died at Cannes.

In the meantime, those who surrounded the Empress were not without fears for her safety, and the Marquis de Castelbajac, the Emperor's equerry, who had been placed in charge of the Regent, endeavoured to get her away, dwelling upon the dangers she incurred by remaining in Paris. His plan was to leave the Tuileries in carriages, as if to take a drive, and he had provided himself with a large sum of money so as to be prepared for all contingencies. They would then take the railway to some large provincial town, where the Empress would be surrounded by all the members of the Government, and here, safe from any revolutionary *coup de main*, peace negotiations might be opened with Prussia.

The Empress, however, would not listen to this proposal. "I have been placed here by the Emperor," she said; "it is here where the danger is, and all the interests of the country are centred in Paris. I shall remain."

Saturday, the 3rd of September, passed off heavily and anxiously. There was a complete absence of official news, but sinister rumours, vague as yet, were being spread, and the most contradictory reports handed about. The Council of Ministers had met as usual, and it was agreed to await a more complete confirmation of the news before making it public. So true is it, that in the most desperate situations hope against hope is adhered to!

Marshal Canrobert's wife, who had not left the residence in the Place de Vendôme, although the Marshal had been replaced in the government of Paris by Marshal Baraguay-d'Hilliers, was getting anxious at receiving no news from her husband, and at last resolved to go to the Ministry of War in search of information. There she learnt that Sedan had capitulated. At nine o'clock Mr. MacDonald, her brother, came to see her, and informed her that on his way he had met a crowd of about five hundred people who were shouting, "Down with the Empire! Vive la France! Vive l'armée!

Vive Trochu!" The mob passed the Tuileries in silence, but broke out again when it arrived in front of the Louvre. Here were the apartments of the Governor of Paris, and the General received a deputation from the crowd.

At ten o'clock the official despatch announcing the surrender of MacMahon's army and the captivity of the Emperor was brought to Madame Canrobert by some friends. The despatch was freely commented upon on all sides. Some said the Emperor had exposed himself like a simple soldier; others added that some of the Generals, General de Failly among others, had been killed by their own men. It was further averred that the troops had fought for four consecutive days, that the army of Metz had twice vainly attempted to break out of the place, and that Bazaine and Canrobert were surrounded. Lastly it was affirmed that the Chamber had resolved to have a night sitting.

Madame Canrobert ordered her carriage, and drove to the Senate to see M. Rouher, taking with her the Baroness de Bourgoing, with whom she was intimately acquainted, and who had dined with her. In this remote and peaceful Luxembourg everything seemed to slumber. What a strange contrast to the growing confusion of the city! M. Rouher was in bed, but Madame Rouher confirmed the truth of the news from the army; Madame Canrobert, however, urgently requested that she might be allowed to see the President of the Senate, and the visitors were admitted. At this moment M. Rouher was aroused and informed that the Chamber was convoked for a night sitting.

At ten o'clock there was a considerable gathering in front of the *Corps Législatif*. One strong party wished at once to proclaim General Trochu dictator, and the party of the Right attempted to associate with his name those of Palikao and another General —De la Mothe-Rouge, I believe—so as to constitute a kind of military triumvirate who should have charge of the defence.

The *Corps Législatif* met at one o'clock in the morning, and General Palikao came forward to read from the tribune the Ministerial proclamation announcing the defeat of Sedan and the captivity of the Emperor. It was as follows:—"After three days of heroic fighting kept up by Marshal MacMahon's army against three hundred thousand of the enemy, forty thousand men have been made prisoners. General de Wimpffen, who had taken command of the army in place of Marshal MacMahon, severely wounded, has signed a surrender. This cruel defeat does not shake our courage. Paris is now in a state of defence. The military forces of the country are organizing. In a few days a new army will be under the walls of Paris, and still another army is forming on the banks of the Loire. Your patriotism, your union, your energy, will save France. The Emperor was made prisoner in the fight."

The reading of this proclamation was succeeded by the greatest uproar, and the *Corps Législatif* was a scene of the wildest confusion. M. Jules Favre then mounted the tribune and read an order of the day demanding the deposition of the Emperor, who was a prisoner. Violent protests arose at this, but the Ministry kept silence, and M. Schneider took the course of adjourning the sitting until the next morning.

What happened during the remainder of that night is not known, but there is good reason for thinking that the time was not wasted. It is stated that the republicans waited upon General Trochu and asked him to take the power into his own hands, and that the General's reply to this was: "Do not reckon upon me; I shall remain faithful to the office I have accepted." On the other hand, General Palikao openly declared that he would not hesitate to send the Governor of Paris to Vincennes if he suspected him of treason.

The Empress during this time, surrounded by those who assisted her in her duties, continued with stoical calmness to wade through heaps of despatches arriving from all parts, gathering up all her energy and courage to support her under so many repeated strokes, and not losing sight for a single moment of the innumerable requirements connected with the defence.

Every hour during that fatal night messengers from M. Pietri, the Prefect of Police, arrived at the Tuileries, bringing news of the hostile temper which was spreading amongst the inhabitants. Ten thousand persons had gathered round the leaders of the revolution in the Rue de la Sourdière, waiting to receive their orders; and it was known that the seizure of the Empress as a hostage had been decided upon.

Three times did the Empress send to the Louvre for General Trochu, in order to concert with him those measures of defence which the situation rendered necessary; and three times was the answer returned that the Governor of Paris was asleep, worn out by fatigue. Through all that night, then, the General's presence was not to be obtained, and the Empress, at this critical moment, was deprived of the support of him who had accepted the task of defending the Government and providing for the security of the capital.

On the morning of the 4th of September, there was great excitement in certain quarters of Paris; the workshops were deserted, and the artisans came down from the faubourgs. At seven o'clock the Empress, who had taken no rest, heard mass in her private chapel, and a few minutes afterwards the Ministers met in council. At this moment General Trochu made his appearance. The Empress received him immediately, and the measures to be taken to put down the insurrection were discussed, the Empress showing throughout greater calm and firmness than any of the others present. After it was over, General Trochu, taking the hands of Admiral Jurien de la Gravière, exclaimed with enthusiasm: "What an admirable woman! A perfect Roman!" This was about nine o'clock in the morning, and it was the last interview the Regent had with the Governor of Paris.

It has been stated that the Empress was forsaken by every one at this terrible time. Nothing is further from the truth. Besides those in attendance on her, and a few intimate friends who had never left her, there was a constant stream of friends—and even of unknown ones — coming and going, and making inquiries respecting the Empress, and placing themselves at her disposal. Never had the Tuileries been so easily accessible and so crowded with visitors.

M. de Lesseps, who had been a friend of the Empress in her youth, was one of the first to come, very early in the morning. He came to entreat the Regent to retire, and was among the first who openly accused General Trochu of treason. He informed the Empress that on that very morning one of the Paris magistrates, mayor of a district abutting upon the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, had come to warn M. Charles de Lesseps, his son, that it was absolutely necessary to take the person of the Empress to a place of safety. This gentleman, Monsieur —— was a man of benevolence, and much respected by the people of his district, and it appears that two artisans to whom he had shown some kindness had disclosed to him the fact that a revolution was on the point of breaking out. "We owe you some gratitude," they said. "The Government is going to be overturned; there will be some fighting, and you are among those threatened with violence. Go away, sir; leave Paris immediately."

The Mayor, however, took but little notice of their warning. "The Government has nothing to fear," said he; "General Trochu will bring out his cannon, and then you will all keep quiet."

The men consulted together a moment, and then addressed the Mayor again: "We don't want any harm to come to you. But the General is acting in concert with our leaders. He was at the meeting in the Rue de la Sourdière last night, and he will be on our side."

The Empress, however, took no heed of this communication, and indeed I have over and over again heard her repeat: "I will never run away in a cab as Charles X.

and Louis-Philippe did. I will never fly from the Revolution."

In the meantime, measures for the preservation of order had been taken, and the ground in front of the *Corps Législatif* and the courtyard of the Palais-Bourbon were occupied by cavalry. It was a stifling hot day, and soldiers might be seen lying asleep by the side of their piled arms. The members of the Right, while waiting for the sitting announced for twelve o'clock, had been holding an extra-parliamentary meeting under the presidency of M. Jérome David, to agree upon common action. M. Jérome David had accepted the post of Minister of Agriculture and Commerce in the Cabinet which had succeeded that of M. Ollivier, remarking at the time that he took the portfolio in the same spirit as one would carry a musket to battle.

Telegraphic reports were now coming in from all directions announcing a great effervescence in the departments, and there was even reason to believe that the Republic had been proclaimed at Lyons and

Marseilles. In the course of the morning the Government had formed the resolution of presenting to the Chambers a Bill for the formation of a Council of Government and of National Defence, composed of five members under the authority of the Regent and named by the absolute majority of the *Corps Législatif.*

The Chamber met at noon, and General Palikao, sick at heart as he was (he had just been informed that his only son had been killed at Sedan) found his patriotism strong enough to support the Government proposal, and many old opponents of the Empire honourably supported it also, as being likely to cut the ground from under other more radical, more violent, and more dangerous propositions. It brought great discouragement, however, to M. de Talhoüet, and he could not help exclaiming, "Alas! Have we not already got far beyond that?"

Eventually the Government Bill was rejected, and a considerable party demanded that power should be transferred to the

*Corps Législatif.* It was also deemed advisable, in face of the revolution which had broken out, that a deputation should be sent to the Tuileries to confer with the Empress-Regent. Delegates were accordingly named, those chosen being, M. d'Aigues-Vives, chamberlain to the Emperor; M. de Pierre, first equerry to the Empress; Count Daru; and Messieurs Dupuy de Lôme, Genton, Kolb-Bernard, Buffet, and Chesnelong. These gentlemen thereupon proceeded in cabs to the Tuileries without meeting with any obstacle; M. Chesnelong, however, became separated from his colleagues in the course of the journey, and they arrived there without him.

It was about half-past twelve; the empty courtyard of the Carrousel was sweltering in the scorching sun, and that of the Tuileries was gloomy and deserted. The Palace, too, at that moment, to use the words of Napoleon I., bore all the appearance of "melancholy grandeur."

The deputation having announced itself, it was ushered into the waiting-room, where were assembled, among others, the Viscountess Aguado, the Countess de la Poëze, Madame de Saulcy, Madame Malakoff, the Countess de Rayneval, M. de. Brissac, M. de Lezay, M. Marnésia, M. de Castelbajac, Viscount de Laferrière, the Marquis de Piennes, M. de Lesseps, and one of the chaplains. They all pressed round the deputies, and M. de Lesseps soon recognized the necessity of the Empress's immediate resignation and retirement.

The deputation requested to be admitted to the presence of her Majesty, and the Marquis de Piennes, one of the officers of the household, went to the Empress's study to receive her orders; and returning immediately with the request that the delegates would follow him, he led them through the apartments to the blue drawing-room, contiguous to the Empress's study. The pieces of furniture and the curtains were all wrapped in their coverings, and the hiding of all this luxury in the dull-coloured envelopes greatly added to the sadness and solemnity of the occasion.

Soon the door opened, and the Empress appeared, followed by Admiral Jurien de la Gravière. She wore a black silk dress and was very pale, and, notwithstanding the heat of the day, appeared to be cold. On her shoulders was a tippet of violet silk, with several small gold-lace galoons, and this she drew round her as if she were chilly. The deputies made a profound bow, and the Empress greeted them with that grace and courteous dignity which characterized her, and then drawing forward a chair placed near her to the angle of the window next to her study, she seated herself, and made a sign to her visitors to be seated also. There were not enough chairs, and the Admiral had to order a servant to bring some. This being done, the delegates were invited a second time to be seated.

The Empress then requested that she should be made acquainted with the object of their visit. And at this supreme moment, and in spite of the anxiety of mind of which her pale countenance bore the trace, her

Majesty preserved the calm dignity of a ruler in presence of her subjects. M. Buffet then addressed her, and in a speech full of emotion, delicacy and deference, he drew a rapid picture of the misfortunes which were overwhelming France and the Imperial family. He dwelt upon the difficulties of the present hour, the irremediable divisions between parties, and pointed out that it was impossible for the *Corps Législatif*, in face of the revolutionary excitement and notwithstanding its desire to maintain the rule of the Empire, to adopt the scheme for the formation of a superior Council of Government and of National Defence proposed by General Palikao. In order, therefore, to deprive M. Jules Favre's proposal for the deposition of the Emperor of all weight, he begged the Empress to accept an intermediate proposition, which, affecting neither the transfer of authority nor the question of government, would at least permit of time being gained and of arrangements being made for the future of the Imperial dynasty.

Here the Empress made a sign for the speaker to stop, and raising her eyes as if the future was being unveiled before her, she said with great clearness and distinctness:—"You are alluding to the future of the Imperial dynasty. Do not let us talk of the future. It does not exist for me. At this moment I cannot deal with anything concerning either myself, the Emperor, or the Prince Imperial" (and there was a trembling of her lips and a momentary tremor in her voice at the mention of her son's name). "It is the country alone," she added, "which must now occupy my attention; that will be the fulfilment of my duty, and I shall carry it through to the end. I don't know what designs may be formed against the Empire and myself, but if my life is demanded, I am ready to give it up; the sacrifice will be slight" (and this was said with a faint smile), "but I cannot swerve from my duty. The proposition laid before the Chamber has been discussed at a Ministerial Council, and was agreed to by all, as indeed all the acts of the Government have been since the Emperor entrusted me with the Regency. I should commit an unconstitutional act if I should take any step not sanctioned by the Council of Regency. If it is the opinion of the Council that it has become desirable to make a fresh proposition, let it meet and draw it up. For myself, I can take no initiative whatever! My honour and my duty, and, above all, the interests of the country in the face of a triumphant enemy, impel me to maintain the integrity of the Government, and up to the very last moment I shall remain faithful to the office in which I have been placed. If I were to act otherwise, like a sentinel who betrays his trust in deserting his post in the hour of danger, I should betray the Emperor's confidence. The only useful course to be taken to-day, is for the representatives of the country to rally round my Government, and for all to unite their efforts against the foreign invasion. If I insist upon the necessity of my presence, even in case it should be seen that resistance is impossible, it is in the hope of obtaining more favourable terms of peace than the enemy would be tempted to impose in presence of a disorganized Government. One of the Great Powers, through the medium of our ambassador, has just made me the offer of mediation on the basis of the integrity of the territory and the maintenance of the dynasty. I have accepted the offer as to the first point; I have declined it as to the second. It is for the country alone to pronounce upon the maintenance of the dynasty."

This allusion of the Empress was to a despatch she had just received from General Fleury, our ambassador at St. Petersburg, and which it has never been possible to discover in the archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

"No," said the Empress, in conclusion, "it is not for me to resign the post entrusted to me. It is the Emperor alone who can relieve me of my duties."

This speech had been pronounced

throughout by the Empress in the measured tones of ordinary conversation, and M. Buffet then took up his discourse. While ready to admit that the most advantageous course for France was to group itself around the Government of the Regent, he thought nevertheless that at that moment the agitation of the public mind and the unfortunate division of parties were absolutely opposed to this course. There was, he said, in the bosom of the Assembly, as there was outside, a current of opinion which favoured the step which the Regent was invited to take, as being the last hope that remained of bringing together the good will and sympathies of all. An immediate decision was indispenable. There was no time for consulting the Council of Regency; indeed the Empress was to a certain extent released from constitutional obligations, by the constraint which the gravity and rapidity of events imposed upon her mind. He implored the Empress to take the only course which would permit of the representatives of the country remaining faithful to their oath, and would preserve that which it was possible might still be preserved.

The interview was constantly interrupted by the arrival of messages bringing news of the increasing dimensions of the insurrection. The Empress read them rapidly, and gave a summary of them in a few words. One of them, however, broke down her courage, and caused her to shed some tears—the eagles which ornamented the pillars of the *Corps Législatif* had just been torn down.

The Baron de Pierre, first equerry of the Empress, and one of those whose devotion and profound attachment to the Empress have never been placed in doubt, then entreated her to yield to the wishes of the majority of the Chamber by cancelling her powers. "More jealous for your Majesty's honour than for your safety," he said, "I implore you to take that course, and save the country from a revolution which will be more dreadful than any France has yet known."

The Count d'Aigues-Vives united his entreaties to those of his colleague, and also advised her Majesty to make over her powers to the Chamber. "It is our last resource," he urged, "and the sole guarantee for the dynasty."

"Do you believe, then," she asked with some impetuosity, "that I am anxious to retain power? Yes, you have seen me, the crowned sovereign, on days of rejoicing. Nothing, from this time forth, will be able to soften the harrowing recollections of the present hour, and I shall carry all the sorrows of France in my heart, for ever."

At this moment M. Bignet, an usher, appeared at the door, and announced that M. de Gardanes, the Emperor's chamberlain and deputy for the Geronde, had come from the *Corps Législatif*, and asked to be admitted as he had an urgent message to deliver.

"Ask him to wait a moment," said the Empress.

The delegates, however, uneasy at the

rapidity with which events were following each other, requested that he should be admitted at once. But the Empress, in the calmest manner, replied: "Pardon me, gentlemen; there is no hurry;" and then, addressing M. Bignet, "Tell M. de Gardanes that I beg he will be good enough to wait a moment." And then she resumed the conversation.

At last, beaten rather than persuaded, she said: "Well, gentlemen, I yield. You shall have my sanction to the proposition you bring me, on the express condition that it shall be ratified by the Ministers and the Council of Regency. I will not separate myself from them at any price."

This concession having been obtained, M. de Gardanes was introduced. He had come from the *Corps Législatif.* The Chamber had just been invaded, and he described the violence of the mob, forcing the doors of the hall, taking possession of the tribunes and of the semi-circle, and threatening the deputies, several of whom had received personal injuries. M.

Schneider, especially, had been almost dragged out of the presidential chair, with cries of "Down with the Creusot assassin! Vive la Republique! Déchéance!" M. de Gardanes added that the eagles had been torn down everywhere.

The Empress listened to these terrible details without losing her calmness, and then Admiral Jurien, who had been silently watching this dramatic incident, rose and addressed M. Buffet.

"Sir," said the Admiral, "the words of an honest man may have a great effect upon a meeting. Go to the Chamber, and get as great a number of your colleagues together as possible. Tell them what you have seen here, and inform them of the conversation which has just taken place. Say to them that the Empress is firmly resolved to maintain the integrity of the Government, and that the representatives of the nation can meet again, on a fresh basis, at some other place than Paris. The Government ought not to commit suicide in face of the Revolution."

At this, M. Buffet threw up his hands with a frantic gesture: "It is too late," he exclaimed. "It only remains now to provide for the Empress's safety."

Then the delegates rose to take their departure, and each one took his leave with a profound bow and a reverent kiss on the hand held out towards him. "I could not help shedding tears," said M. Buffet after this interview, "in presence of such disinterestedness and greatness of soul."

Just as the deputation withdrew, the Ministers, forced to leave the Chamber filled by the mob, arrived at the Tuileries to advise the instant departure of the Empress. M. Jérome David, pale and anxious, passed through the waiting-room, followed by M. Daru, MM. Henri and Léon Chevreau, and M. Busson-Billault. The latter said to Madame de Bourgoing, who had just arrived with Madame Canrobert: "The Chamber is invaded, and the majority are dispersing. The men whom we have seen eager for a smile from the Emperor, are now endeavouring to depose him. How is it possible to believe that we should meet here under such circumstances as these? We have come to prevail upon the Empress to depart."

The Ministers, when admitted to her Majesty's presence, entreated her to take her departure; but still she resisted. At last M. Piétri, the Prefect of Police, arrived. It was then three o'clock, and the insurrection was in full progress. Some one remarked to the Empress that the Palace was crowded with people—friends, devoted servants and soldiers. They were all resolved to share her fate, and if she did not decide to leave immediately a collision would occur, and all, including herself, would be massacred. These entreaties at last prevailed.

"Spare France a crime," exclaimed M. Jérome David. "I beg your Majesty to let me utilize the last shred of authority that is yet remaining to me, to order a train to be in readiness to take you wherever you wish to go."

"I have not thought about that," answered the Empress.

Bignet was then asked for a railway guide, and they all bent over the map to examine the different routes. Admiral Jurien proposed to take the railway to Versailles, or else to get to Havre, which they could easily reach by the little gunboat *Puebla*, belonging to the Seine flotilla.

"I am too well known at Versailles," replied the Empress; and indeed she often went there from Saint-Cloud. "As regards getting to Havre by the Seine, surely, Admiral, you cannot think of such a thing; I could never bear the journey."

The Admiral then proposed they should go to Lorient, where a man-of-war, placed at the Empress's orders, would convey her away from France. While these different plans were being discussed, Prince Metternich, the Austrian ambassador, and the Chevalier Nigra, the Italian ambassador, were introduced, and were informed of the difficulty they had in coming to a decision.

"We have come to offer the Empress our protection," said M. Nigra.

Prince Metternich then drew Madame Lebreton to the embrasure of a window, and had a conversation with her in a low voice, and Madame Lebreton afterwards came towards the Empress and spoke to her privately. Her Majesty made a sign of acquiescence, and Admiral Jurien then approached the Austrian ambassador and asked him a question.

"Be assured, Admiral," replied Prince Metternich, "that I will answer for everything. Besides, you know, you can accompany her Majesty."

The Empress then took hasty leave of the Ministers in terms of touching tenderness, and it was evident there was no time to be lost, for the crowd had commenced to invade the Tuileries, and had already advanced as far as the gate of the private gardens. The Empress could see the mob and hear their threats and savage cries.

At this moment, when the safety and even the very life of the Regent were in danger, a voice near her exclaimed: "We must send for Trochu."

"No; never mind," the Empress replied; "if he were at the post of honour he would be here; it is not for us to remind him of it."

The Princess Clothilde then came in to join the Empress, wishing to share the perils which threatened her, and her Majesty apprised her of the resolution she had taken, and urged her to leave Paris likewise.

The Princess, faithful to the ancient tradition of the princesses of the house of Savoy, lived almost the life of a recluse at the Palais Royal, and the simplicity of her tastes, her exalted virtue, and boundless charity, have caused her memory to be held in reverence by the population of Paris. So much was she respected, that she was able to pass through Paris in her carriage on that 4th of September, meeting with nothing but evidences of popular sympathy and regard on her way to the Lyons railway station.

The people in the Tuileries were assembled in the waiting-room, anxiously waiting for the upshot of all these events, and the Ministers in passing through informed them that the Empress was about to depart. On hearing this, the Viscountess Aguado went to the Empress and begged to be allowed to accompany her. The Duchess de Malakoff, Madame Canrobert, and Mesdames de Rayneval, de Saulcy, de la Poëze, and de Sancy, ladies of the Palace, as well as the Baroness de Bourgoing, were also waiting there, calm and determined, aspiring to the honour of being allowed to go away with the Empress and to share her dangers. In a few minutes Madame Aguado returned.

"Come," she said, "the Empress wishes to bid you good-bye."

Then they all went into the second drawing-room, and the Empress came from her study to meet those who had remained her friends up to the last hour. She wore the same dress as in the morning, and walked slowly along with her head slightly bent. All were profoundly moved, and there was a moment's interval filled with broken expressions of grief and anguish.

The Empress then shook hands with each one in turn, and they all entreated her to take them with her. Looking round, however, upon that circle of friendly faces, with an expression of deep sorrow and gratitude, she thanked them all, and added:

" I do not wish to involve any person in my ill fortune, and happier times will come again in France."

She then shook hands with Madame Canrobert, embraced her, and said a few words to her in a low voice; and Madame de Bourgoing, who came next—the lady whose husband had joined the volunteers of the department of the Nièvre — remarked to the Empress:

" My husband is at the head of 3,500 devoted men; I am come to take your Majesty's orders."

" Orders ! " exclaimed the Empress. " I have no longer any to give. How can it be helped ? " (and here her voice broke down).

" There are events too powerful even for the staunchest courage; and the human will cannot prevail against fate. I was obliged to yield. I shall never forget, however, what you have been to me, and how you have supported me in my saddest moments. I thank you very much. Adieu! Adieu! "

They all pressed round her once more, kissing her hands and sobbing, and begging afresh to be taken with her.

" It is impossible. Ladies, I thank you all." And then she embraced them again and repeated the word " Adieu! "

But in the midst of her tears, her countenance suddenly lighted up with a sad, sweet smile: " No, not adieu! " she exclaimed. " Au revoir! We shall see each other again soon, shall we not? "

And the answer came from all: " Yes! Au revoir! "

Sadly and reluctantly the Empress then quitted the room, turning again and again to take a last look at her friends, and then disappeared. They separated with broken hearts, but all felt that as a violent mob was knocking at the door there was nothing left for the Empress but to go.

They were all in perfect ignorance of where her Majesty was going to, but they were satisfied she would be safe under the protection of the ambassadors of two great Powers—of the Italian ambassador, who owed so much to the Emperor, and of the Austrian ambassador, always so great a favourite at Court, and so ready to show the attachment of both himself and his wife to the Empress. This consideration was a great consolation for those faithful hearts, so forgetful of themselves in their mistress's misfortunes. They felt now that their task was done; that it was quite useless to attempt resistance; and that all that remained for them was to go their way.

Just at this moment, General Mellinet, the commander of the National Guard, who had been all the morning at the Tuileries, came into the room. "I have come," he said, "to ask the Empress's permission to sweep off all these brawlers."

When M. de Castelbajac informed the

General that the Empress was leaving the Palace, he became like a man beside himself, and seizing M. de Castelbajac by both arms, shook him violently. "But we cannot allow ourselves to be slaughtered like women," he exclaimed.

At this, M. de Castelbajac showed him his revolver. "See, General, I have six shots here, and we won't be slaughtered until they are exhausted. But we had better wait till the Empress has got clear away, or she will be massacred with us."

The old soldier then cooled down, as he could see there was nothing to be done. He was a very popular man in Paris, and carried the scar of a terrible gash across the face which he had received in the Crimea.

"Do your best, General," said M. de Castelbajac, "to keep out the crowd until the Empress has got away from the Palace."

The aged General then went and gave the order for hauling down the flag, and advancing from the direction of the gardens, commenced to parley with the mob, mount-ing a chair in order that his voice should be better heard.

"The Empress has left the Tuileries," he shouted. "You are Frenchmen, and would not wish to dishonour yourselves by insulting a defenceless woman. Let there be no disturbance now; but go away quietly."

His presence checked the rush of the crowd for a moment, but the weak railings surrounding the private garden soon gave way in twenty places, and the crowd, passing over them, rushed pell-mell across the flower-beds.

M. Sarcey and M. Armand Gouzien were at the head of the multitude, the former being recognized by Viscount de Laferrière as he stood at one of the windows. He had often seen M. Sarcey at the Tuileries, and now remonstrated with him in such angry tones that a duel very nearly followed.

But to return once more to the interior of the Palace. After having taken leave of the Empress, all the inmates went their way. Madame Canrobert and Madame de Bourgoing went together. The former lady had been advised to make her servants remove their tricoloured cockades, but she had refused to do this, and although the Rue de Rivoli was blocked with people she got through without difficulty.

Madame de Bourgoing directed her steps towards the Palais de l'Industrie, to resume her duties in the linen department of the Red Cross Society's branch established there. On her way through the Champs-Elysées she found, in singular contrast with the part she had left, that everything was quiet: the usual performance was going on at the Théâtre de Guignol, and fashionable ladies were driving about in their slender vehicles. The whole efforts of the rioters were evidently concentrated round the Chamber and the Tuileries; the leaders had chosen this locality in the hope of bringing on a conflict.

In the meantime, Madame Aguado and Madame de la Poëze were determined not to leave the Empress until the last moment, and they stood by her side while she hastily put on a hat, thick veil, and travelling cloak.

A tray was standing on one of the tables, containing the breakfast, as yet untouched. The Empress had taken no food that day, and the ladies entreated her to partake of some before she left the Palace, Madame de la Poëze remarking that she stood in need of all her energy, and that her strength would fail if she did not take some nourishment.

Her Majesty then hastily swallowed a few mouthfuls of bread, and took a last glance around at that familiar home to which she was never destined to return. Amongst the papers strewed about, her eye fell upon the fatal despatch from the Emperor announcing the defeat of the army and his own exile. She took it up with the intention of carrying it with her, but quickly changed her mind. "No," she said; "it is better they should find it here." And she laid it in a conspicuous place on her bureau.

Then the Empress took a last farewell of the Viscountess Aguado and Madame de la Poëze, and there only remained Madame Lebreton, Prince Metternich, the Chevalier

Nigra, Admiral Jurien de la Gravière, M. Conti (a devoted member of the Emperor's household), and an orderly officer. Surrounded by this small following, the Empress made her way through the private apartments to the staircase leading to the ground floor, in order to reach the Prince Imperial's Porch—that on the right abutting on the Tuileries courtyard looking towards the Palace. A little brougham used by the aide-de-camp on duty was standing here in its usual place, the driver on the box, and ready to start at the first signal.

The carriage was called up, but Prince Metternich drew attention to the fact that the cockade and Imperial crown painted on the doors might attract attention, adding that his own carriage was in attendance on the quay, and it would be better to send for that. The orderly officer volunteered to fetch it up, and Prince Metternich explained that it was a vehicle without armorial bearings and drawn by a white horse.

The officer then set off for the quay, and the Empress took a seat in the lobby to wait for his return. It did not take him long to get over the distance of about sixty yards which separated the Palace from the Carrousel gate, but at the moment when it was being opened to let him pass a column of rioters crowding through the five large wickets leading from the Louvre rushed into the Place du Carrousel, singing, yelling, and raising threatening cries. Retreat was thus cut off, and the officer hastened back to stop the Empress from proceeding in that direction. By the time he had reached the Prince Imperial's Porch, the howling mob was tugging at the railings. The officer explained matters in as few words as possible, and Admiral Jurien advanced alone in uniform to speak to the crowd, with the object of gaining time; but the Admiral's movement was seen by a sergeant in command of a squad of Chasseurs-à-pied, and the sergeant immediately joined him and surrounded him with his men. Meantime the gate held firmly, notwithstanding the efforts made to break it down.

Arrived in face of the mob, the Admiral

told those in the foremost ranks that the Empress had left the Palace, and begged them to refrain from useless violence. A party of the National Guard then came up; their object was to relieve the squad of Chasseurs, but seeing what was going forward the officer in command placed his men with the Chasseurs and put himself under the Admiral's orders.

"Prevent them, if you can," said the Admiral, "from breaking down this gate, or everything will be given up to pillage. The Empress is no longer there."

"You may reckon upon us, sir," was the reply of these brave fellows, and they tried to parley with the mob; but finding they could not get a hearing, they forced them from the gate with the butt-end of their rifles, and off rushed the crowd to another entrance. The Admiral then returned to where he had left the Empress, but she had disappeared.

The news of the Empress's departure soon spread among the people; their cries became more savage than ever, and men climbed upon the two statues on each side the gate. The fellows belonged to the riff-raff who always come to the front when there is any chance of disturbance; and, curiously enough, one of these statues was the Law armed with the sword, and the other Justice with the scales.

Admiral Jurien met General Lepic in the Palace; the General had just changed his uniform for private clothes, and from him the Admiral learnt that the Empress had gone back into the Palace to find another outlet, and that doubtless she had already got away. Some men-servants were also there making preparations for departure, and at the express orders of the Empress they had thrown aside their livery.

In the meantime, what had become of the Empress? Seeing the mob intent upon attacking the Tuileries, she had decided to return to her apartments, and pass through the Louvre in the hope of finding an exit by way of the Place Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois. All this left wing of the Tuileries, which was a continuation of the Empress's private apartments, and where the theatre was located, was in a very dilapidated state, and was soon to have been put in repair. It had been proposed that the Prince Imperial's household should be lodged in the great pavilion down by the water, which would then be connected with the interior of the Palace; and there were already signs in the preceding apartments of the coming alterations.

The route now being followed by the Empress as a fugitive, as she made her way towards the Salle des Etats, was the very same she had trodden a short time before with her husband and son on either side of her, and accompanied by a brilliant retinue, when she attended the grand ceremony of communicating to the Emperor the result of a triumphant plebiscite. The way to the Salle des Etats was still encumbered with materials through which a passage had to be picked. After crossing the hall, the door of the museum was found to be closed, and the Empress's companions had to call and knock to attract the attention of the doorkeepers; but the only response was the noise and confusion from without. At last M. Thélin, the keeper of the Emperor's purse, having learnt which way the Empress had gone, joined the party, bringing with him a master-key which would open every door in the Palace. Then they entered the picture-gallery, and here her Majesty took leave of M. Conti and the orderly officer. These gentlemen hesitated a great deal about leaving her, but they were reminded that so many persons together would be sure to attract attention. The Empress observed at the same time that the orderly officer had on his bright blue uniform with the silver shoulder-knots, and made him promise not to venture out of doors in such a dress. The Empress's party then proceeded through the picture-galleries and went down the staircase leading to the Assyrian Museum, the only persons then with her being Madame Lebreton, Prince Metternich (whose arm she had taken), and M. Nigra.

Their object was to make their exit by

the wicket-gate abutting on the Place Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, but here again the gates were guarded by rioters, and all egress was impossible. A rush was, however, made towards the church, and in a moment the square was empty, this circumstance being availed of by the fugitives to get away from the Louvre.

Prince Metternich and the Chevalier Nigra now started off to fetch a conveyance, as it was then useless to think of reaching the Prince's carriage, which was stationed higher up on the quay. In their absence the crowd came rushing back, and fearing that two unattended women like themselves might be the objects of curiosity, Madame Lebreton stopped a passing cab, and dragging in the Empress after her, ordered the man to drive to the address of one of her friends, M. Besson, Councillor of State.

Before the cab could drive away, an urchin cried out: "Look! the Empress!" but his voice was lost in the tumult, and the cab turned into the Rue de Rivoli in the direction of the Boulevard Haussmann.

M. Besson was not at home. He had gone to the Tuileries to place himself under the Empress's orders. Madame Lebreton, therefore, fearful of attracting the notice of his servants, by entering his house in his absence, returned to the cab and drove to the Avenue de Wagram, the residence of the Marquis de Piennes. This gentleman also proved to be absent, not having yet been able to reach home after the Palace of the Tuileries was invaded. What was to be done ?

It was too dangerous to return to the city, they therefore sought to remember who among the persons on whom they could rely were living in the neighbourhood. Madame Lebreton thought of Doctor Evans. His mansion was in the Avenue de l'Impératrice, and he was an American. It was better, she thought, to apply to a foreigner, whose nationality would protect him from certain responsibilities. This course was decided upon, and they knocked at Mr. Evans's door. This gentleman, fortunately, *was* at home.

In this hospitable household, the unfortunate lady, broken down with sorrow and excitement, was treated with the utmost respect, and tended with the greatest care and devotion. The Doctor undertook without hesitation to provide for the Empress's safety, begged her to take a short period of rest, and in the meantime made arrangements for her departure from Paris. The Empress was by this time worn out with grief and anxiety, and she fell into a state of complete prostration, till a troubled sleep came and restored her drooping energies.

But what had become of the other inmates of the Tuileries? The Viscount and Viscountess Aguado had been fortunate enough to reach their carriage before the Place du Carrousel had been taken possession of by the mob. The Countess de la Poëze was the last to quit the Palace. After having witnessed the Empress's departure, she returned to the waiting-room, put on her hat, and had the presence of mind to look into a work-basket, where we kept our needlework and other trifling matters, to see if anything had been left behind. Here she discovered a golden thimble belonging to one of us, and a prayer-book of mine, a thick and heavy volume, which I had placed there a few days before. She decided to take charge of this book, and then, in company with M. de Cossé Brissac, M. de Laferrière, and M. de Castelbajac, prepared to take her departure.

In the ushers' room, Bignet was still at his post in his usual costume: dark-red coat, knee-breeches, and black silk stockings. Madame de la Poëze spoke to him in passing through: "The Empress has gone," she said; "you had better not remain here, the mob will be here presently. But be sure you change your clothes; that is the Empress's order."

Bignet then called Count de Brissac's attention to the visitors' book, and asked him what he should do with it. It was a register of rather large dimensions, and M.

de Brissac, thinking it advisable not to leave there the names of those who had been received, tore out all the leaves which had been written upon and carried them away.

At the top of the staircase leading to the Empress's private rooms, one of the Cents-Gardes stood as sentinel, upright and immovable as on the days of grand receptions. Madame de la Poëze informed him that the Empress had departed, and told him he also ought to go.

"Is there no one left in the rooms?" asked the man.

"No one," he was told.

Bringing down his carbine then for the last time with a heavy thud upon the floor, which awoke a mournful echo through the vaulted passages, the soldier methodically placed his weapon in the angle of the window, as was his custom when being relieved by a comrade, and followed the others downstairs.

During this time the garden had been filled with people. The gate of the Clock

Pavilion had been broken open, but the mob, surprised at their easy victory, and fearing an ambush, hesitated as yet to penetrate into the interior of the Palace.

Madame de la Poëze lifted her veil in going through the gardens, and the people pressed around her, scrutinizing her closely. "It is not the Empress," they said, and allowed her to pass on.

General Trochu was all this while prancing about on horseback in the thick of the demonstration, in the wake of the Deputies who were going to the Hôtel de Ville to proclaim the Republic. When there, he got himself invested with the title of President of the Government of National Defence, and, without consulting the nation, did not shrink from thus supplanting the Government he had undertaken to defend.

About five o'clock a sort of procession was formed, composed of some three or four hundred men in blouses; they were more or less filled with wine, and marched down singing to the Champs-Elysées. They were taking M. Gambetta, the new Minister of the Interior, to the Place Bauveau, to install him in his office. Two of M. Chevreau's secretaries were found there at their post, and M. Gambetta, who was accompanied by several members of the Government of National Defence, asked to be shown to the minister's room. This was pointed out by the secretaries, and M. Gambetta walked in and took his seat at M. Chevreau's bureau. Then, turning to the crowd which had followed close at his heels, he said: "Now, then, I have no doubt you will leave me to my work. I must beg you all to retire."

The men quietly withdrew as requested, while M. Gambetta prepared to enter upon his duties, M. Picard talking the while with one of M. Chevreau's secretaries with whom he was personally acquainted. "It must be confessed," he said, "that the Government has managed things badly. If the Empress had retired from the Regency last night, we should not have got here so easily as we have done."

The conversation was interrupted by

some person coming to inform M. Picard that the mob was intent upon getting the eagles down from the front of the house, and that, being very heavy, their fall might injure some of the people. "Tell them," replied M. Picard, "that what they are doing is both stupid and dangerous. And if they persist, well, so much the worse for them; let them go on. A few fellows like them the less will be no great loss." While he was speaking the heads were knocked off from both the eagles, and in the evening Paris was illuminated as if a victory had been gained over the Prussians.

Next morning, the 5th of September, the Empress left Paris. The sequel is known. After many relays, Deauville was reached at six o'clock in the evening, and from this place Dr. Evans had induced Sir John Burgoyne to take the Empress in his pleasure yacht to England.

Although the yacht was not to sail till daylight, they went aboard at midnight in order to escape notice, and next morning at seven o'clock sail was set, and the Empress bade farewell to the shores of France. On her way across, the yacht was caught in a squall of unusual violence, and the frail boat, only fifty feet long, and built solely for pleasure trips, was constantly on the point of foundering.

When I saw the Empress in England she gave me an account of this rough voyage. "The little boat," she said, "was tossed on the waves like a cork, and I believed we should all be lost. But death in a raging storm like that appeared to me easy and welcome. I thought I should disappear, and no one would know I intended to take refuge in England; what had become of me would never have been discovered, and my end would have been wrapped in impenetrable mystery."

## CHAPTER XI.

**How I learnt the Emperor was a Prisoner—Officers escaped from Sedan—Paris on the 5th of September—At the Tuileries — The Viscountess Aguado — The Princess d'Essling—The Countess de la Poëze—The Empress at Hastings—General Fleury and the Russian Court —Alexander II.—A Letter from the Empress to the Czar—M. Thiers at St. Petersburg—M. Strode at Chislehurst — The Régnier Incident — Marshal Bazaine — General Bourbaki—The Army of the East—The Army of Metz—The Empress's Vow—Thanks of the Government of National Defence to the Empress Eugénie.**

On the 20th of August I was with the Empress; the preparations for the siege were going on apace, and the enemy's progress made it appear certain that the investment of Paris was close at hand. On this date the Empress urged me to take advantage of the few days during which free egress would be possible, and go once more to see M. Carette, as a proximate separation was certain, the end of which could not be foreseen. I hesitated very much about going away, even if only for a few days. The Empress, however, still persuaded me, and promised that she would let me know as soon as a stoppage of the communications should be threatened.

Accordingly I went down to my home in the Aisne, the country all the way bearing a gloomy and desolate appearance. It was the season of active agricultural operations, but work in the fields was almost at a standstill. People were flying from their homes in every direction, and the roads were crowded with miserable carts filled with women and children heaped up pell-mell upon scanty loads of wretched household furniture, and dragged along by sorry beasts led by the halter. The poorest people are the most attached to their worldly goods, and these poor souls were eager to remove their belongings beyond the reach of a rapacious enemy. It was a sad and sickening sight, this panic of a whole population, and this precipitate flight through a country so beautiful to the eye and so apparently peaceful.

We had an ambulance established at our house, and the doctor of the neighbourhood, a priest, and a few devoted women, held themselves in readiness to undertake the nursing of any wounded that might be brought in. I soon set about arranging everything possible for their comfort, and then, being without authentic news of what was going forward (I knew that the vague accounts which found their way into the newspapers were not to be relied upon), I waited for a sign from the Empress recalling me to Paris.

On Sunday the 4th of September, after mass, we were taking breakfast in company with the chaplain of the Nogent Chapel, and were exchanging our sad reflections, when, on looking through the dining-room window, I saw a young man coming up to the house. It was a foreman in M. Carette's employ, and belonged to the Soissons Mobiles. Thinking he must be the bearer of news, I ordered him to be shown up at once.

"The army has surrendered at Sedan, and the Emperor is prisoner."

That was the message he brought, and if a thunderbolt had fallen upon me I should not have been more profoundly horrified. I had risen to receive the message, and I fell to the floor unconscious. However, I soon came to, and then my first thought was to rejoin the Empress. As all my necessaries were in Paris, I only required the time to have a carriage got in readiness, and drove immediately to the Chauny railway station. M. Carette accompanied me, but intended to separate from me at the station, being retained by his duties of mayor and councillor; besides, he had no wish to leave home.

We found that despatches had been received at Chauny, and learnt that the Republic had been proclaimed, and then M. Carette decided that I should not depart alone—he would go to Paris with me. The train-service had been thrown into great confusion, and we had to wait several hours before we could even make a start, the rails being completely monopolized by heavy goods trains, some going northwards, and others bound for Paris, laden with all kinds of supplies and provisions.

At last, at about nine o'clock in the evening, a passenger train drew up. The carriages were few, and the compartments were full, but we managed to find places, and found ourselves in presence of some officers escaped from Sedan. In front of me sat a colonel of the artillery, with his arm in a sling. I asked him if he was wounded, and where he came from.

"From Sedan," he replied. "We have been beaten, and I received a wound, but so slight, however, that I was able to escape. I remained for two days at a farm, from whence I was taken to the nearest railway station hidden under a load of hay, and I am now on my way to Paris to place myself at the disposition of the Minister of War."

"And what about your men?" I asked; "and your guns?"

Tears came to the colonel's eyes as he answered this. "Ah, madame! My poor gunners! all cut to pieces. We have no longer either men or guns."

"And the Emperor?"

"The Emperor?" he replied, shaking his head. "I saw the Emperor from a distance in the direction of Bazeilles, in the thickest of the firing, and I thought he must have got killed. But they told me afterwards he was a prisoner; that's a great misfortune for him. I have lost the whole of my outfit, my horses, and all, and I now possess nothing but the tattered uniform I am wearing."

The other officers sat silent and dejected, but seemed irritated and annoyed. The only head-covering some of them had was the hood of their cloaks; it was just as they had escaped. One of them even had no tunic; and his shirtsleeves were visible under the waterproof he had wrapped around him.

There was quite a young man sitting in one of the corners; he was a sergeant of the line. His head was wrapped up in bandages, and he sat pale and motionless like one who had fainted. At one place where the train stopped I bent towards him and asked if he was in pain, and whether anything could be done to relieve him. But without opening his eyes he replied in a peevish voice that all he wanted was to be left alone, and that if he died like a dog it would be the fault of those brigands of generals who had betrayed their country and sold the army.

Every one kept silence after this, and the train continued its dragging journey, having frequently to be run into sidings to allow others to pass.

We did not reach Chantilly until two in the morning, and on the platform M. Carette recognized a gentleman by the name of Corbin, who was walking up and down and appeared to be expecting somebody. M. Corbin was formerly Prefect of the Aisne; he had married a niece of Madame de Feuchères, who inherited her aunt's property. He lived in the beautiful château of Bourgfontaine, just outside Chantilly, and had always kept up his acquaintance with the princes of the Orleans family.

Two travellers, muffled up closely in their cloaks, descended from the train, and M. Corbin having joined them they all went off at a sharp pace. M. Carette pointed them out to me; he thought he had recognized the Duke d'Aumale, and our train had certainly come through from Belgium. We afterwards learnt that the Duke d'Aumale *did* return to France immediately after the proclamation of the Republic.

We arrived in Paris about six o'clock in the morning, having spent nine hours on a journey usually completed in two or three hours at most. An old railway porter, an army pensioner, who had obtained some favour through me at some time or other, recognized me, and spoke to me.

"What a sad thing!" he said; "Napoleon is a prisoner, and all those beggars have proclaimed a Republic. But *that* won't last."

I asked him whether he knew what had become of the Empress. But he was ignorant on this point.

At this early hour Paris bore its usual aspect. Gangs of street-sweepers were at their work; some dilapidated cabs were on their stands waiting for fares; and here and there a policeman was seen slowly pacing along with his hands stuffed into his pockets. It was impossible to realize that on the day before an event of such importance had been accomplished. The paramount sensation was that of surprise. I drove direct to the Tuileries, and through the closed gates I could see that the courtyard was deserted. I was refused admittance, and had to call the lodge-keeper, who recognized me and came to speak to me through the closed gate, which was guarded by a squad of the National Guard.

"Where is the Empress?" I asked.

"Her Majesty went away yesterday at three o'clock," answered the man, "accompanied by Prince Metternich and the Italian ambassador."

He also informed me that my friend Viscountess Aguado was one of the last to leave the Tuileries, and that no doubt she had joined the Empress. I thereupon went immediately to Madame Aguado's residence in the Rue de l'Elysée. I found the door closed, but they opened it for me, and the concierge told me, with a great show of mystery, that the Viscount and Viscountess had gone to Belgium to join the Empress there, and that they intended to remain with her.

This information, however, did not satisfy me; so from there I went to the Rue Jean Goujon, where lived the Princess d'Essling, principal lady of honour. The Princess received me at once, and, in spite of the early hour, I found that she was dressed with as much care as if she expected to go to Court. She was wrapping wadding round the flowers ornamenting a splendid old Saxon clock. I fell into her arms and burst into tears.

The Princess, although deeply attached to the Empress and devoted to the Imperial family, was much more calm than I was.

"Where is the Empress?" I asked. "I want to find her, and wait upon her as usual."

"My dear," replied the Princess, "there is no longer any Court, and no more duties to be performed. In future, you see, our unfortunate master and mistress will have none but trusty friends about them."

"But," I continued, "everything is turned upside down, and things are at a crisis! As soon as peace is signed, the people with their seven million votes will call the Emperor back, and all will be set right again."

"No; believe me," replied the Princess, "those are all delusions. The Empire is destroyed for years to come, and the Emperor will rule no more. Later on, perhaps, the Prince Imperial will come back, and if he does, he will put everything on the old footing. For the present, however, we shall have to witness the most foolish acts of madness."

Then the Princess expressed her sorrow

at not having been with the Empress when she went away. Since the Court had come from Saint-Cloud she had been accustomed every day to drive to the Tuileries in her great coach lined with white satin; she maintained her rank with the greatest dignity, and would not for the world have shown herself in a more simple conveyance. At two o'clock on the day previous she had gone up in her carriage as usual, and passed through the Champs-Elysées without obstruction, but on reaching the quays her carriage became involved in a crowd. The people recognized the family cockade, stopped the horses, and maltreated the servants; and finding it impossible to get through the mob, the Princess had to turn back amid a volley of oaths and threats.

"I am going to leave France," she added; "and I shall rejoin the Empress as soon as possible."

I begged her to send me all the news she could, and then we separated. It seemed to me then that the Princess was labouring under some delusion which, at her age, might be excused. I thought that the way in which she looked at things was only the result of defective reasoning. But it turned out that the Princess d'Essling, although rather cool on first acquaintance, was a very excellent woman, with a clear mind and a steady judgment. She saw everything in its true light. It was I who had formed delusions.

Having learnt that Madame de la Poëze had remained with the Empress almost up to the last moment, I paid this lady a visit; she gave me a faithful account of all that had occurred at the time of the abandonment of the Tuileries, and assured me she did not know to what place the Empress had withdrawn. I thought at the time she was keeping the truth from me, as a matter of precaution; but the fact was, she was as ignorant as everybody else of what had been done at the last moment.

We separated somewhat reassured, and comforted with the idea that the Empress would surely have been brought into a place of safety through the medium of the two ambassadors. What would have been our anguish and distress if we had known the truth!

That same day I went to Dieppe, where I had left my children. My intention was to wait here for news, and rejoin the Empress as soon as possible, taking my children with me. M. Carette, however, did not see how, in these troublous times, he could remain apart from the people among whom he resided. The Prussians were pressing on, and he longed to be at home. We therefore separated once more, and he returned with all haste to Nogent, where he found himself in a position to render great services to his country all through the war and during the six months of occupation. The commune of which he was mayor was one of those which came off lightest, although he constantly refused to pay the taxes levied by the Prussians, and his conduct won for him the official thanks of the provincial representatives of the Government of National Defence.

I remained several days in Dieppe, in

absolute ignorance of what had become of the Empress, although I wrote in every direction in search of information. At last I was apprised of her arrival at Hastings, where the Prince Imperial was already staying. The Prince had been without news since the 4th of September; and knowing nothing beyond the fact that his mother had been forced by the mob to quit the Tuileries, he, and those who were with him, were tortured with doubt and uncertainty. The Prince was visited at Hastings by the Duchess de Mouchy on her arrival in England from France. She was not expected by the Prince, and seeing her coming he thought it was the Empress, and rushed forward to meet her, being grievously disappointed on discovering his mistake.

The yacht of Sir John Burgoyne, which we left battling with a violent storm, at last got safely through, and eventually entered the little port of Ryde, and from that place the Empress went on to Hastings, arriving there on the 8th of September, exhausted with fatigue, broken down with sorrow, and lacking everything. She had started without the slightest preparation on a journey which lasted four days, and had to borrow clothes and linen from the Duchess de Mouchy and the Princess de Metternich until articles of necessity could be procured.

When her Majesty took up her residence some time after at Chislehurst, she remembered that at Arenenberg several trunks containing a whole trousseau had been preserved, which once belonged to Queen Hortense. This she sent for. It was all of the finest and most beautiful linen that could be imagined; nothing is made in the present day at all approaching it in quality; and by a lucky chance it fitted the Empress exactly.

The last official political despatch which the Empress received at the Tuileries on the 4th of September came from General Fleury, our ambassador at St. Petersburg. The General had asked to be relieved of his diplomatic appointment as soon as war was declared, in order that he might take up his position in the army. He had a very comfortable post at the Russian Court, being a great favourite of the Czar and honoured with his confidence; and he had succeeded to a very great extent in removing from the Emperor's mind the painful recollection of what occurred in Paris during his visit in 1867.

Alexander II. expressed his regret at the idea of losing our ambassador, and begged him to remain at St. Petersburg. The Emperor also desired the General to remain at his post, reminding him that the support of Russia might be very useful to France in the war we were just entering on, and that he might be able to render great service to his country where he was. The General, therefore, consented to remain.

When news of the Emperor's surrender reached him, the General, at the instiga- of the Empress, inquired to what extent we could reckon upon the Czar's intervention to induce Prussia to treat, and the Russian Emperor distinctly favoured the idea of bringing about an arrangement.

It was General Fleury's despatch announcing that the Czar was disposed to advise Prussia to cease hostilities, that the Empress alluded to when speaking to the delegates from the Chamber at the interview on the 4th of September; and this is the despatch that could never be found after M. Jules Favre went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and whose existence the Government of National Defence has attempted to deny.

But however this may be, as soon as the Empress arrived in England she applied her mind to securing for France all the advantage to be derived from the favourable disposition of the Czar; she telegraphed to General Fleury urging him to continue his endeavours in that direction, and at last decided to make a direct appeal to the Emperor of Russia, which she did in the following letter:—

"Sire,—I write to your Majesty to-day, an exile from my country. If I had taken a similar step a few days ago, when the destinies of France were still in the hands of the power constituted by the Emperor, I should perhaps have appeared, in the eyes of your Majesty and those of Europe, to doubt the recuperative powers of my country. The latest events, however, have made me a free agent, and I am now at liberty to make a direct appeal to your Majesty. *If I have properly understood the reports of General Fleury, our ambassador, your Majesty set aside à priori the idea of any dismemberment of France.* Fate has decided against us; the Emperor is a prisoner, and calumny is heaped upon him; and another Government has taken upon itself the task the fulfilment of which we regarded as our own duty. I therefore now entreat your Majesty to use your influence in the direction of obtaining an honourable and lasting peace, as soon as the right moment shall have arrived. May France, whatever her Government, find in your Majesty the same good-will that you have manifested towards us all through our sad trials. As, however, an erroneous interpretation may probably be put upon anything I may do in my present situation, I beg that your Majesty will keep secret this step that I have taken, which your generous mind will easily comprehend, and which the memory of your visit to Paris has inspired me to take.—EUGENIE."

To this appeal the Emperor of Russia replied that the political condition of France being then so different, any intervention on his part would no longer have the same effect. But notwithstanding this, it was owing to Alexander II.'s efforts, at the instance of General Fleury, that the interview at Ferrières on the 15th of September was granted. The continuation of the war was considered by foreign nations to be a mistake on the part of France, and the action of M. Jules Favre in breaking off the negotiations set all the other Powers against us.

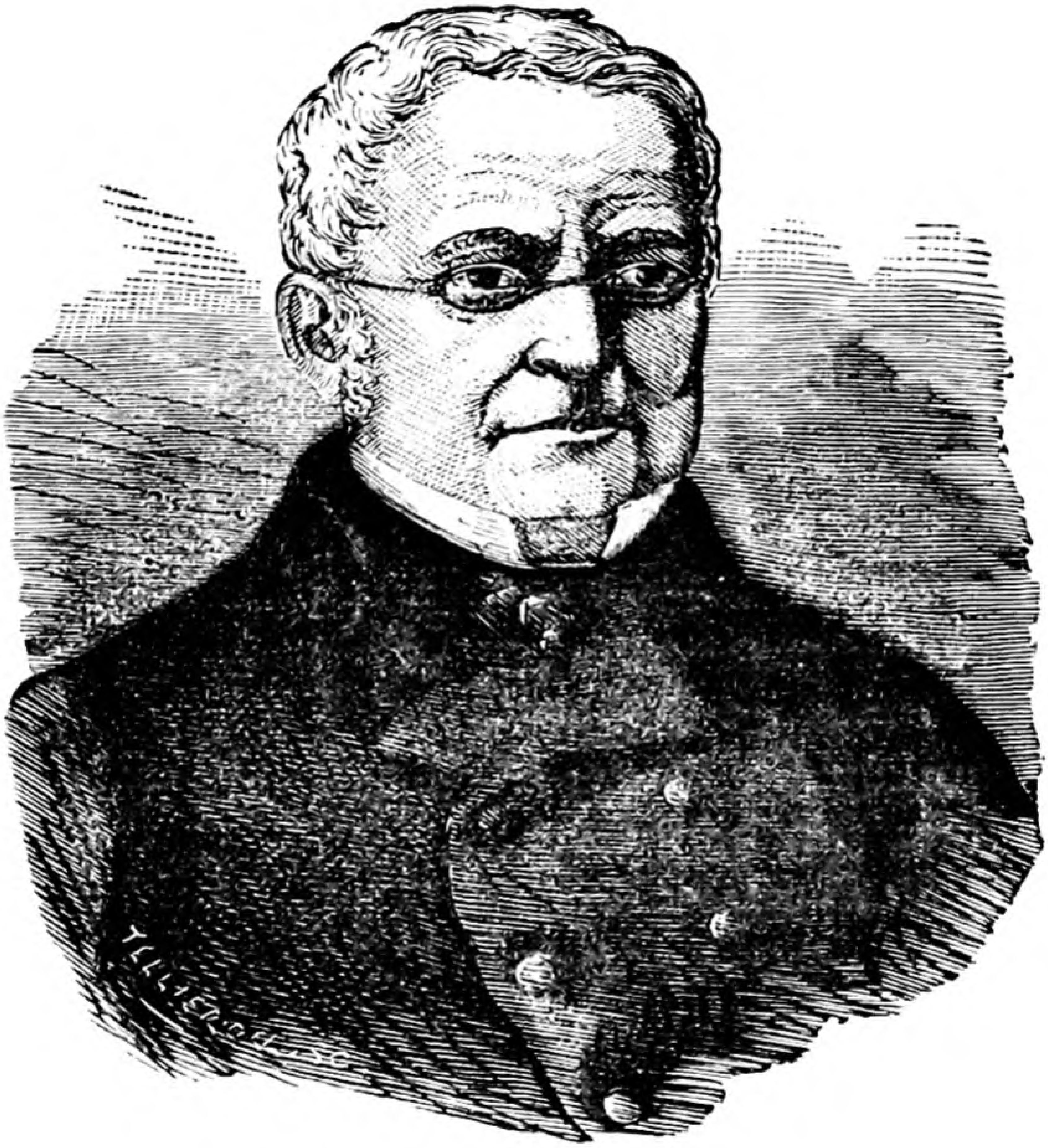
General Fleury transferred his functions on the 5th of September to M. de Gabriac, first secretary to the French Embassy at St. Petersburg, but it was none the less the object of his constant solicitude, as far as lay in his power, to nourish the favourable disposition of the Emperor of Russia, whom he joined at the camp of Tzarskoi-Selo. In the course of conversation—which, as General Fleury had resigned his position, was no longer of an official character—Alexander II. did not seek to hide the gloomy forebodings aroused within him by the recklessness of the leaders of the new Government in undertaking to carry on a desperate war, when our army had disappeared and the greater part of our armaments were destroyed. Those whom we had formerly beaten considered that the punishment of defeat was not harder for us than it had been for other nations, and that we must yield in our turn, as others had formerly yielded to us.

"France, also, must learn how to accept defeat," the Czar said. "During the last twenty years, cruel defeats have been inflicted on most of the Great Powers of Europe. The nations which have suffered them have rallied round their sovereigns, and they have recovered themselves. Why, then, should France stand alone in her inability to bear what all the rest have had to suffer? My father, the Emperor Nicholas, had to treat at Sebastopol; the Emperor of Austria did the same after Solferino and Sadowa; and more recently, has not the Treaty of Prague opened many bleeding wounds? Has it now become dishonourable to acknowledge defeat, when a continuation of the struggle is an act of supreme folly? What have you to hope for in the present state of things, with a self-constituted Government, and an army made prisoners at the moment when its presence is required to drive the enemy from the country? You can only prolong the struggle at the expense of all your interests. France may still continue to fight, it is true, but she cannot hope to win. Prussia's extortions will increase as your disasters multiply, and according to the sacrifices she herself makes to carry on the war. You will exhaust the country completely, and, leaving out of sight the blood vainly shed, you will prepare for yourselves a long train of ruin and disorder. There are laws even stronger than the will of man. Let your national pride bend, and treat for peace as soon as possible."

These are the kind of opinions that M. Thiers gathered up in his peregrinations from Court to Court in Europe. He was absent on the 15th of September, at the time of the Ferrières meeting, and although he adopted as his own the ideas he had picked up in his travels, he was unable to secure their adoption on the 31st of October, when a fresh attempt was made to come to an arrangement with Prussia, in which he was concerned.

When M. Thiers left Paris on his European tour, taken with the ostensible motive of awakening the sympathies of Europe in favour of France, he went direct to Russia.

It has been stated that the old minister of the Government of July wished to avoid accepting a post among the members of a Government which he foresaw would only be of short duration, and that he absented



THIERS.

himself at this moment in order to reserve himself for the future. But be this as it may, on his arrival at St. Petersburg M. Thiers drove at once, in a very modest equipage, to the French embassy. Here he was politely refused admittance; indeed the house where General Fleury had resided had been rented by the General on his own responsibility. M. Thiers, therefore, had to take up his abode in an hotel.

The letter which, as we have seen, was addressed by the Empress Eugénie to the Czar, was alluded to by the Empress of Russia on taking leave of General Fleury, our ambassador, at Tzarskoi-Selo, and her Majesty spoke of it with visible emotion as a document worthy of admiration on account of the noble spirit of patriotism which it exhibited.

General Fleury left Russia for good at the end of September, and his family took up their residence in Switzerland, while he went to Wilhelmshohe. He received notice that he would not be allowed to enter

France, under pain of arrest, and so he divided his time during the period of the war between his family in Switzerland and visits to the Emperor in Germany.

At Hastings, always much frequented during the season, the Empress found herself involved in a stir and bustle which annoyed and disturbed her. She therefore desired to take up her residence temporarily in the outskirts of London, and endeavours were accordingly made to find a retired spot that would suit. It happened at this time that Mr. Strode, a rich Englishman who had known the Emperor in former times, came to see whether he could be of any service to the Empress, and on being informed that she was in search of a habitation, he placed his mansion—Camden House, Chislehurst—at her disposal. One of the officers in attendance on the Prince Imperial thereupon went to Chislehurst to inspect the house, and found it was an extensive mansion surrounded by a park of rather gloomy appearance, but very comfortable and convenient. Mr.

Strode offered the house to the Empress as a residence, but the Prince Imperial's aide-de-camp gave him to understand that her Majesty could not accept the offer, but that she wished to rent a place.

"I am quite willing to let it," was Mr. Strode's reply.

"The Empress has no idea," resumed the officer, "of establishing herself on so large a scale, and the rent of this house must be a great deal more than I have been authorized to give."

"How much will the Empress pay?"

The officer named a rather modest sum.

"That's just what I want for it," answered Mr. Strode.

The bargain, therefore, was struck, and about the 20th of September the Empress took up her residence in that fatal abode where she only intended to remain for a limited time, where so many tears were destined to flow, and where the Empress's spirit was broken down by the deepest sorrow a mother has ever experienced.

Previous to the departure from Hastings, however, an event occurred which has always been wrapped in impenetrable mystery, which gave rise to endless conjectures, and to which the key has never been found. One day a Frenchman whom nobody knew, M. Régnier by name, called and asked to see her Majesty. The Empress, however, refused to receive him, because, under the then critical circumstances, it was deemed prudent not to have any dealings with strangers. M. Régnier, however, was not to be discouraged, and he put himself in the way of the Prince Imperial in one of the walks he was accustomed to take, with his tutor, M. Fillon, as his only companion. M. Régnier introduced himself to the Prince, and told him he was going to Wilhelmshohe to pay his respects to the Emperor. He then asked whether the Prince would not like to send his father a view of that part of the country where he was staying, and he drew from his pocket a view of Hastings. The Prince then wrote a couple of lines on the photograph and added his signature, and returned it to M. Régnier with his thanks for the sentiments the latter had expressed.

On hearing of this singular adventure, the Empress was greatly vexed, and telegraphed immediately to the Emperor at Wilhelmshohe not to give heed to anything which might be communicated to him by an unauthorized person, who said he was going to Wilhelmshohe, and who might produce a photograph with the Prince Imperial's signature.

It was not to Wilhelmshohe, as it appeared, that M. Régnier intended to go. He was at Ferrières two days afterwards, and there he obtained an interview with M. de Bismarck, to whom he presented a photograph, signed by the Prince Imperial, as a proof of the genuineness of his mission. It was never known what his motives were for seeking this interview, but after it was over he obtained a safe-conduct for Metz, at which place he arrived two days later!

At Metz, thanks to the photograph which

he again produced as a pledge, M. Régnier succeeded in reaching Marshal Bazaine. He represented himself to the Marshal as the bearer of a message from the Empress, who, he said, with the consent of Prussia, was about to sign a treaty of peace. It was therefore necessary that her Majesty should have at her side some one representing the army of Metz, and she requested that either Marshal Canrobert or General Bourbaki should be sent to her immediately.

Marshal Bazaine accordingly sent for General Bourbaki, and ordered him to follow M. Régnier and place himself at the disposal of the Empress. General Bourbaki was one of the Emperor's aides-de-camp, and had given abundant proofs of his devotion. But on learning that he was to separate himself temporarily from his troops, he raised some objections. Marshal Bazaine, in reply, alluded to the perilous position of the army, and strongly urged him to go at the invitation of the Empress. He even gave the General a suit of civilian clothes in order that he should not attract attention in going through the Prussian lines. General Bourbaki asked for more precise instructions.

"You will do whatever the Empress bids you," replied the Marshal.

And so the General consented to go, feeling certain that nothing would be required of him which his patriotism and his honour as a soldier would not allow him to perform. He set off, therefore, accompanied by M. Régnier, who had been provided with a safe-conduct by the German authorities available for two persons.

On arriving at the outposts, M. Régnier introduced a Prussian colonel to the General, who said he had been waiting for the General twenty-four hours, and proposed to take him to Prince Frederick Charles. The astonished General, however, refused to accompany him, saying he had no business to transact with the Prince. M. Régnier then left him, saying he would return immediately with the treaty of peace ready to sign. However, he did not return, and the General was accompanied as far as the frontier by the Prussian colonel, who, in taking leave of him, confessed that he knew who he was and that he considered it an honour to have been appointed his escort.

The General passed into Belgium, where Madame Bourbaki was residing, and then he learnt for the first time the state of revolution into which France had fallen. He had a shrewd suspicion that the mission on which he was bound, with no defined powers, and at the orders of Marshal Bazaine, might have quite a different import from that which he had been given to understand. Nevertheless he went to England, and arrived at Chislehurst on the 20th of September just as the Empress was sitting down to breakfast.

Her Majesty's surprise and emotion at the sight of him, and the first few words exchanged, showed him he had been a dupe, that he was not expected, that he had not been sent for, and that there was nothing to be communicated to him.

He then puzzled his brains to discover why he had been enticed from an army of whose critical situation he was perfectly aware, and in his despair his only thought was to return to Metz and resume his command. But would he be permitted again to pass through the lines of the besiegers?

The Empress, on her part, strongly advised him to make every endeavour to rejoin his troops, and through the medium of Lord Granville a safe-conduct was procured from the Prussian embassy in London. The General was then soon on his way back to France, but at the frontier the most cruel deception of all awaited him. Notwithstanding all the assurances given him, he was refused a passage through the lines, and he saw himself irretrievably cut off from his companions in arms.

General Bourbaki's next step was to proceed to Paris, where he placed himself at the orders of the Government of National Defence, and received the command of the eastern army, which, however, he first had to organize. When the armistice was signed, M. Jules Favre forgot to include him in the arrangement, and unable as he was to hold his own against the victorious armies which hemmed him in on all sides, at the head of inexperienced troops who flocked over the frontier during a severe snow storm, he was reduced to the last extremities. Two heavy blows following so closely together were too much for this brave man to bear; he blamed himself for the double fatality which had separated him from his companions in arms at Metz and which had driven him out of the country with his army in distress, and he tried to blow his brains out with a pistol. He was saved, however! but the scar of that wound is one of the noblest marks an unfortunate hero could carry.

The days which followed General Bourbaki's appearance in England were the most painful of any through which the Empress passed during that long period of mourning and catastrophe. After the first moment of surprise which the General's unexpected arrival caused her, her Majesty sought to discover the reason of this mysterious journey, and solely preoccupied as she was with France, she asked herself what relation could be established between this proceeding and the condition of the army of Metz.

The doings of a man of Bourbaki's stamp were quite exempt from any doubtful interpretation, but in this incomprehensible journey, without powers to act, without any instructions to guide him in his character of a negotiator whose acts might lead to serious consequences, was there not a suspicion of error or absence of mind? Might not the General have forgotten something, or have omitted to do something he ought to have done? How was it possible to arrive at the real end and object of such a mission?

To all the Empress's questions General Bourbaki had invariably given the same reply:—"I know nothing about it. No communication whatever was entrusted to me for your Majesty; I was simply told in an indefinite sort of way that my assistance was essential to the welfare of the army. I received orders to come, and I have come."

At the same time, the state of the troops shut in around Metz was depicted by the General in the darkest colours, unable, as they were, to break through the besiegers' formidable lines, and decimated by sickness.

The Empress feared suspicion might be cast upon any steps she might endeavour to take, but she nevertheless sought for information in all directions. Her days and nights were passed in painful anxiety, and she was continually asking herself whether something might not be done to save the army of Metz. But she could think of nothing, and the time slipped away without bringing any solution with it.

One day when the Duchess de Mouchy paid a visit to the Empress, she found her kneeling in her study in fervent prayer. "O God!" she was saying, "send me an inspiration which will enable me to save the army of Metz, and I will turn sister of mercy, and serve you and thank you my whole life long."

When I saw the Empress again in England, she told me the sad tale of the terrible anguish through which she had passed.

The only thought of the Empress, as long as the war lasted, was how she could second the efforts made for the defence of the country. After having approached the Emperor of Russia, the Emperor of Austria, and the Queen of England, she addressed her entreaties to all the other sovereigns of Europe, with the object of obtaining an intervention in favour of France, whatever her form of government. From every one came the reply that in presence of the Revolution and an irregular Government all foreign intervention had become impossible.

The efforts made by her Majesty to bring about a peace became known at last, and the French embassy in London received instructions to convey to the Empress Eugénie the respectful thanks of the Government of National Defence; and this was perhaps one of the most curious facts connected with this strange but painful period.

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OR,

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It is a foregone conclusion that the English version of Mme. Carette's interesting work, which Messrs. DEAN & SON have just published under the title of "My Mistress, the Empress Eugénie; or, Court Life at the Tuileries," will command a wide circle of readers. To so many of us the person is known, and to all of us the romantic and brilliant story of the Empress is so familiar, that these new pictures of her life when she was at the zenith of her happiness and fortunes, will be of quite peculiar interest, while to those who have hitherto thought of her only as a sort of brilliant butterfly, until these latter years, they will come as a revelation. For what do we see reflected in the pages of the ex-reader to the Empress, who was able to judge so well of her real thoughts and disposition, and who saw her in all the privacy of her domestic life? The brilliant, luxury-loving leader of society disappears, and in her place there is the anxious and devoted wife, the tender, ever-watchful mother, the kindly friend, the woman unwearying in good works among the sad, the suffering, and the poor. We learn that the beautiful and brilliant Empress, surrounded by all the luxury and splendour of the Napoleonic Court, was at heart a lover of simplicity; that even her sumptuous gowns were as often as not "political toilettes," worn for

the purpose of initiating a fashion, and so stimulating trade in some national centre of industry. We get pleasant glimpses of the Empress reading her newspapers, chatting with her husband, playing with her child, or writing her daily letters to her mother, the Countess de Montijo, to whom she was devoted. As we turn the pages of this interesting volume we light now upon a humorous touch, in which the foibles of some of the Court set are amusingly hit off; and now upon some piece of pure pathos, as the record of the loving preservation by his mother of the Prince Imperial's first toys. Here and there, too, grave matters are touched upon; and we learn, for instance, how deep was the sorrow caused to Napoleon III. and his Consort by the tragic fate of Maximilian. Mme. Carette's memoirs range from the early days of the Orsini attempt at assassination at the door of the Opera House to the dark days which followed Sedan; but the writer has avoided touching at any considerable length upon matters of State, questions of Imperial policy, or any of the graver subjects in which her beloved mistress unquestionably played a part none the less influential that it was frequently unsuspected. Mme. Carette's volume is essentially one which, to paraphrase Thackeray, might be said to have been written by a woman for women; and the amusing sketches of the vagaries of fashion, the little thumbnail sketches of the *grandes dames* of the Court and their peculiarities, the lovingly delineated pictures of the Empress Eugénie in all her Imperial splendour, and, still more, in the unaffected charm and grace of her private life—these will afford abundance of pleasant pages for the reader, and cannot fail to add to the sympathy and respect already felt for the distinguished exile of Farningham. The memoirs make no pretensions to literary style, but possess something which is superior to that—an obvious veracity and good faith, which lend the volume some historical value apart from its intrinsic interest as a chronicle of much of the life of a brilliant, beautiful, and influential woman, who has had not a little to do with events which have changed the face of the map of Europe, but who, even in the height of her Imperial grandeur, never forgot that there is something wanting if she is not a good and true woman.—*Court Journal*, October 5, 1889.

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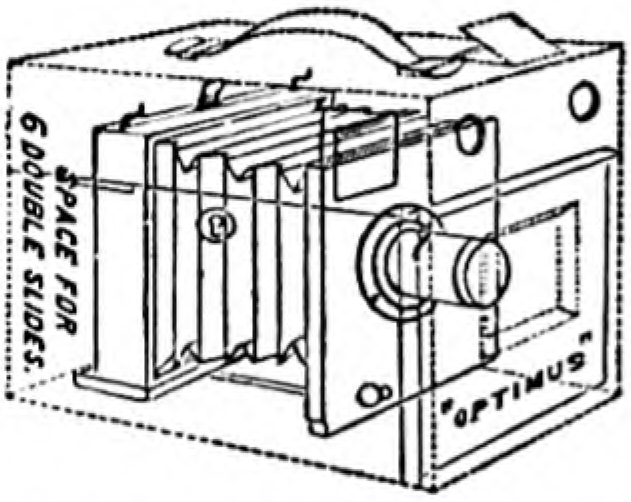

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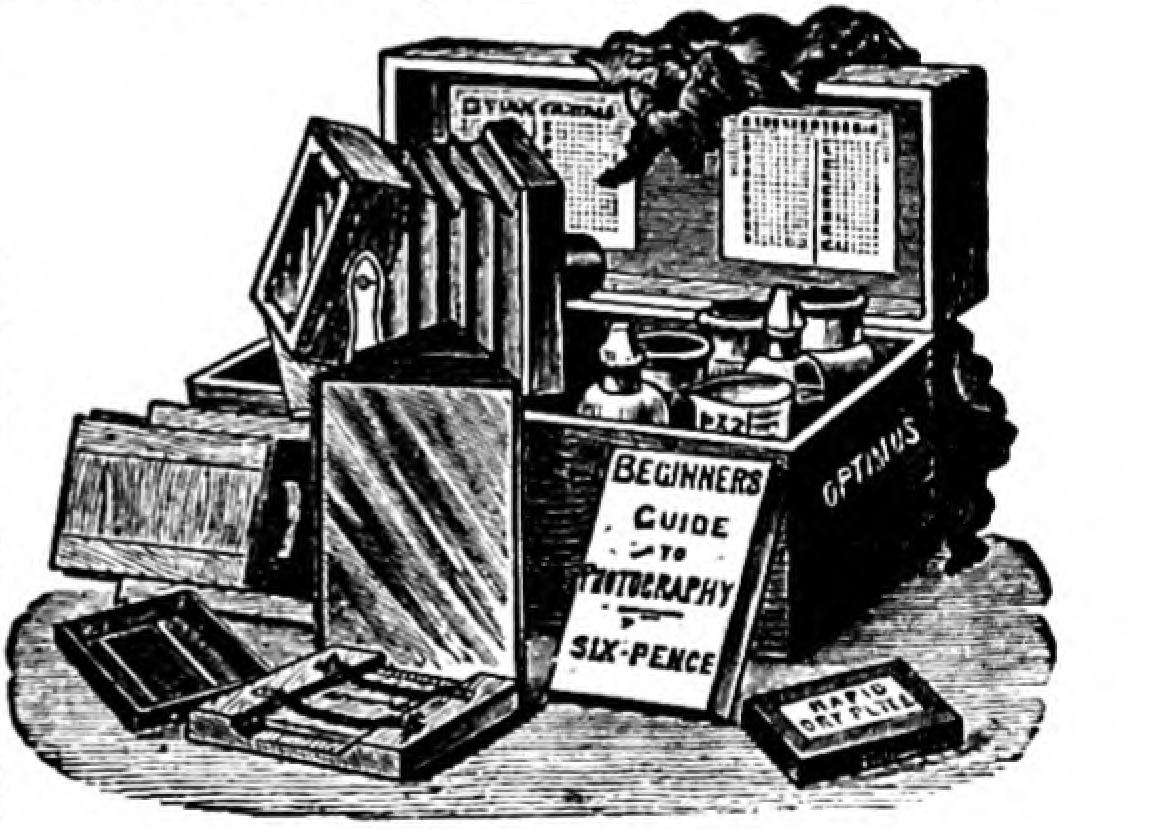
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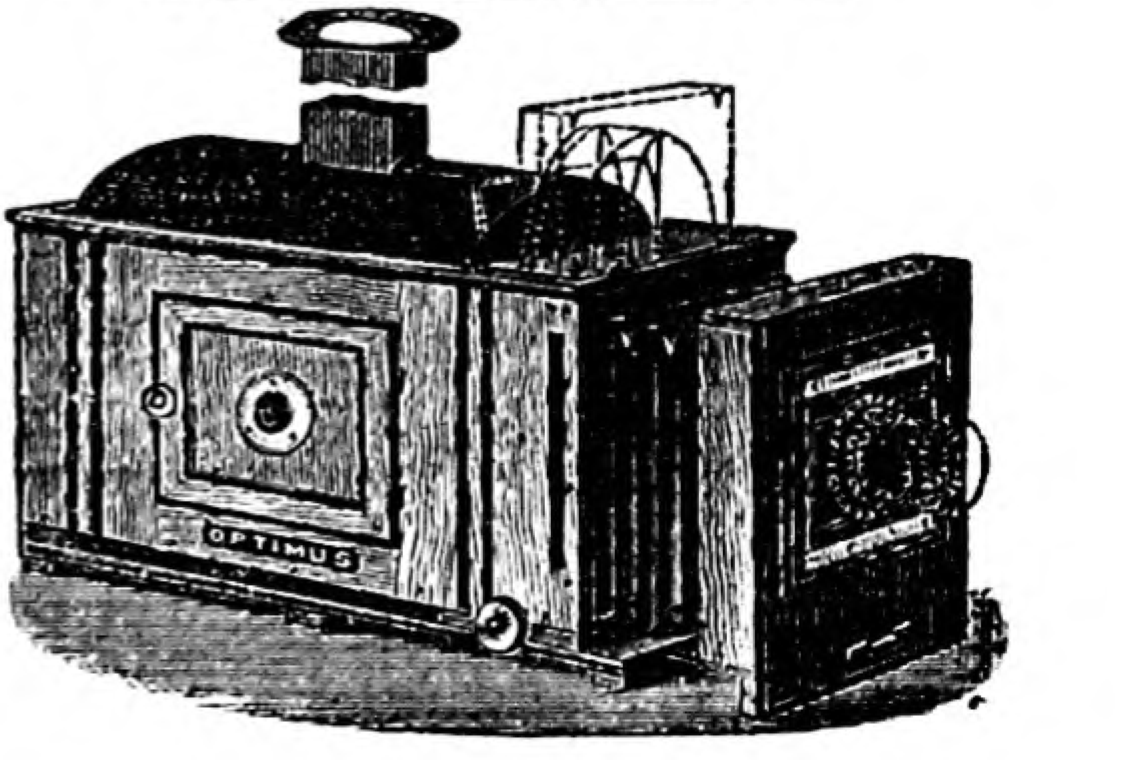

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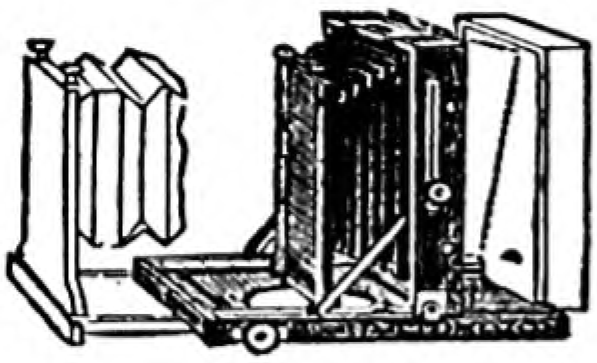

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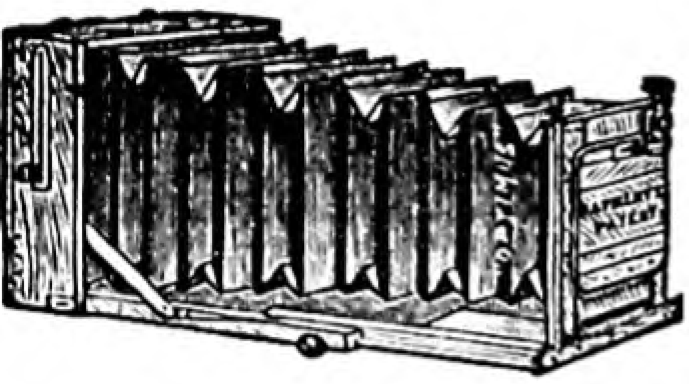

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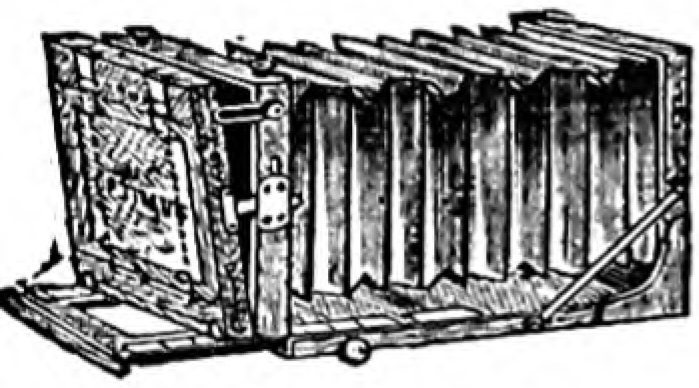

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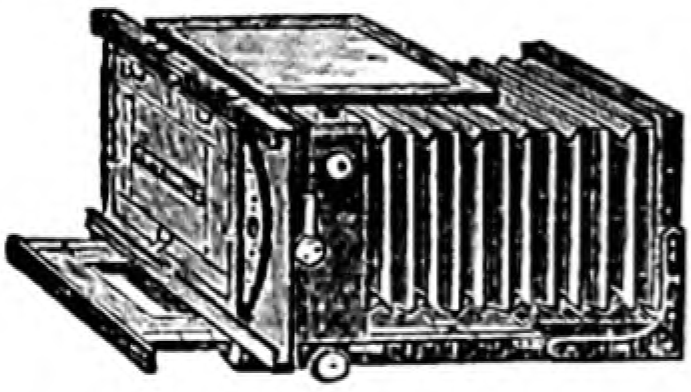

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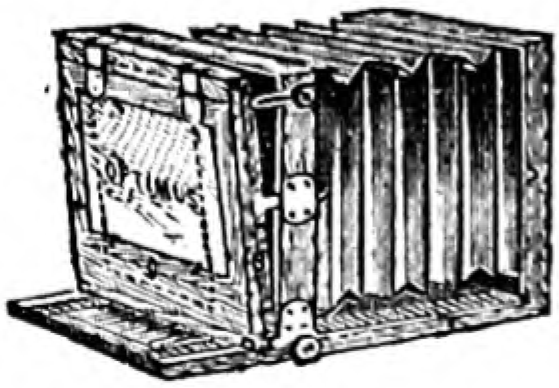

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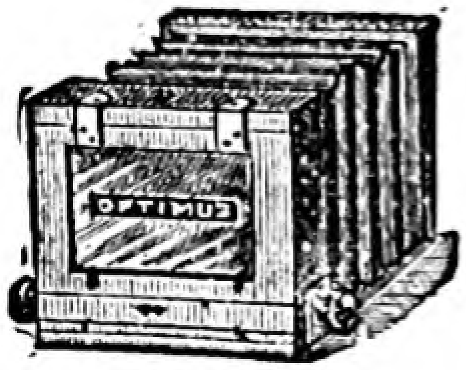

'OPTIMUS'

## PORTABLE FOLDING CAMERA.

Cheap, Strong, Serviceable, and Efficient.

Durable, Bellows, hinged Focussing Screen with sliding adjustment, readily and securely held in exact position by means of a pinion passing through the body nearest bottom or base board, and having milled head screws on either side of the Instrument to clamp tight.

Camera and One Double Dark Slide.

| 4¼×3¼ | 5×4 | 6½×4¾ | 8½×6½ |
|---|---|---|---|
| 21/- | 24/- | 39/6 | 48/- |

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MANUFACTURE

CAMERAS, LENSES,

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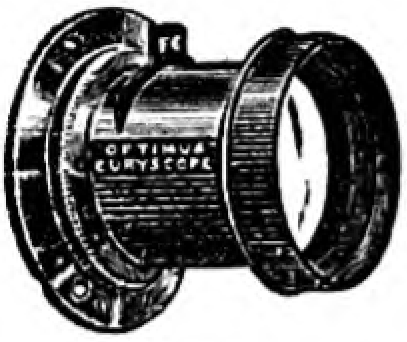
AND PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS.



## 'OPTIMUS' RAPID EURYSCOPE.

The Aperture is F/6. The Lenses are of Special Optical Glass, constructed with the nicest precision of curvatures, so maintaining good marginal definition, coupled with the most extreme rapidity.

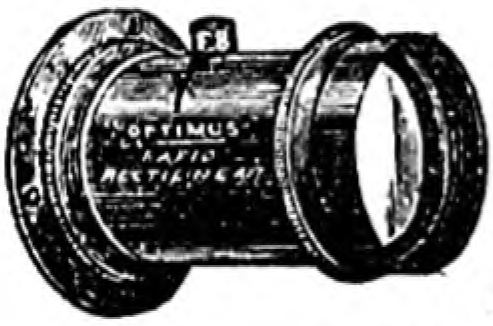
5 × 4, **63/-**; 7 × 5, **94/6**; 8 × 5, **110/-**; 9 × 7, **126/-**; 10 × 8, **220/-**

OPTIMUS
WIDE
ANGLE
EURYSCOPE

## 'OPTIMUS' WIDE-ANGLE EURYSCOPE.

F/9·50. This Aperture is exceedingly open for wide angle work. The definition, however, is in no way sacrificed, as the curvatures are most perfectly accurate, and the most minute detail in architectural and interior subjects is rendered with the maximum of crispness, and a total absence of distortion.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| To cover ... ... | 5×4 | 7×5 | 9×7 | 10×8 |
| Equiv. Focus inches | 3¼ | 4¾ | 6 | 8 |
| Price ... ... ... | 63/- | 94/6 | 126/- | 220/- |



## 'OPTIMUS' RAPID RECTILINEAR.

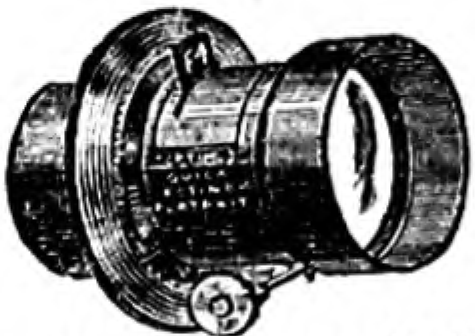
Aperture F/8. Second only to the above for Rapidity, therefore well suited for instantaneous effects, out-door groups and views, as well as interiors; copying and enlarging are also within the capabilities of this lens—in fact, its work may be styled UNIVERSAL.

| 5/4 | 6/5 | 7/5 | 8/5 | 9/7 | 10/8 | 12/10 | 15/12 | 18/16 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33/- | 45/- | 49/6 | 64/- | 82/6 | 127/6 | 142/6 | 180/- | 225/- |

## 'OPTIMUS' WIDE-ANGLE SYMMETRICAL.

Aperture F/16. Specially adapted for Architecture.
Can be used to advantage when very close to the subject.

| 5/4 | 7/5 | 9/7 | 10/8 | 12/10 | 15/12 | 18/16 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 39/- | 52/6 | 82/6 | 127/6 | 142/6 | 180/- | 225/- |



## 'OPTIMUS' QUICK-ACTING PORTRAIT.

Aperture F/4. Specially constructed for short exposures in Portraiture. They are second to none, definition being maintained by their perfect optical qualities.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Diameter ... ... inches | 2 | 2¾ | 3¼ |
| Price ... ... ... | 90/-<br>1 B | 120/-<br>2 B | 180/-<br>3 B |

"We now turn to the 'OPTIMUS RAPID EURYSCOPE.' With its full aperture of 1¾ in. (its equivalent focus being 11 in.), it defines with EXTREME BRILLIANCY, and when used with a stop it easily covers a 10×8 plate to the corners, which is larger than that engraved on the mount as its possibility. Working as it does with such a LARGE APERTURE (F/6 approx.), it serves as a portrait and group Lens, as well as a landscape and copying objective. There is no doubt of its proving a most USEFUL LENS."
J. TRAILL TAYLOR, *Brit. Jrnl. of Photography.*

"We are pleased to find upon trial that the Lens ('Optimus' Rapid Rectilinear) sent for review is really an excellent instrument."
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PORTRAIT LENS.—"The 'OPTIMUS' LENSES are MODERATE in price, and yield most EXCELLENT results."
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Manufacturing Opticians,

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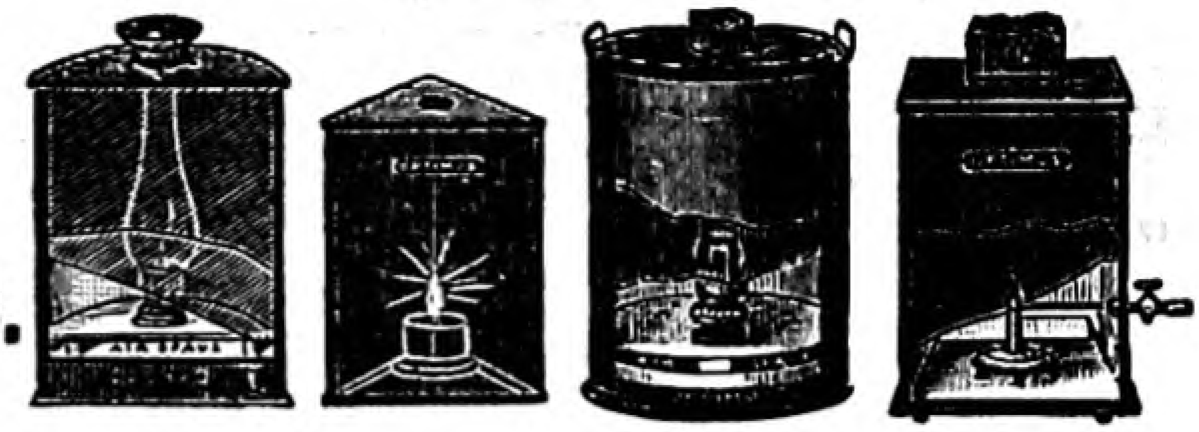
## DARK ROOM DEVELOPING LAMPS.

7/4 2/6 13/- 13/-



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## 'OPTIMUS' PATENT Plunge Shutter.

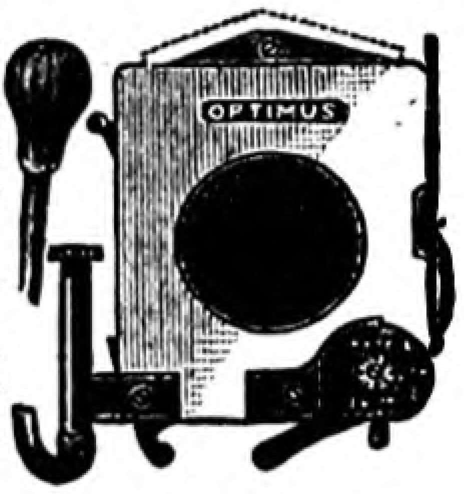
WITH PNEUMATIC RELEASE.

| | |
|---|---|
| For $\frac{1}{4}$×$\frac{1}{4}$ Optimus Lens | 30/- |
| " $\frac{1}{1}$ " " | 36/- |
| " 10×8 " "<br>" 12×10 " " | 48/- |

"Mr. J. Traill Taylor exhibited a pneumatic shutter, giving exposures of any duration, at will, and avoiding all vibration. He stated it was one of the best shutters he had seen, and said it was made by Perken, Son & Rayment."

*British Journal of Photography.*

This may be styled the most PORTABLE of shutters. It is made either to fit on the hood or may be adapted to act between the lenses of a doublet.



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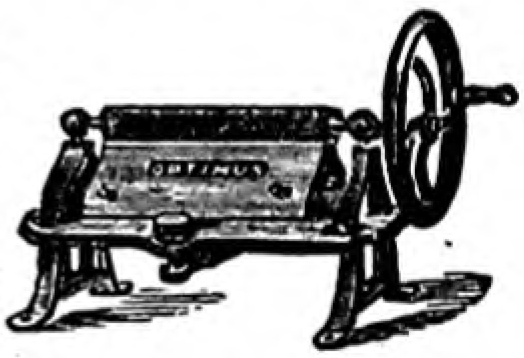
## 'OPTIMUS' BURNISHER FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC PRINTS.

The Burnishing Bar is specially hardened. The Frame is of superior and convenient construction. It is Nickel-plated, and of beautiful finish.

| | $\frac{1}{4}$ plate | $\frac{1}{2}$ | $\frac{1}{1}$ | $\frac{10}{8}$ | $\frac{12}{10}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Price | 20/- | 30/- | 36/- | 45/- | 60/- |

Larger to order.



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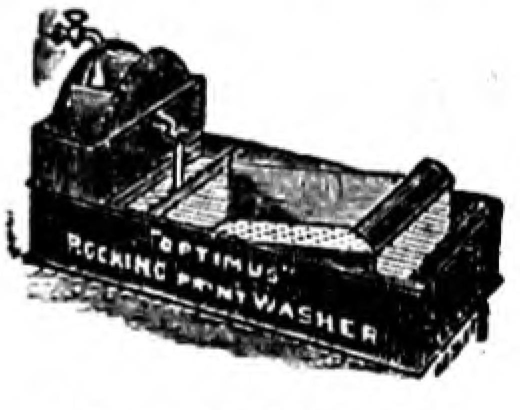
## 'OPTIMUS' ROCKING PRINT WASHER

Water running from a tap revolves the wheel which is connected with the cradle, causing it to rock up and down at each revolution. A syphon is fitted to drain the tank. One hour's washing is ample.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9×7 cradle | 18/6 | 13×11 cradle | 32/- |
| 11×9 " | 28/- | 16×13 " | 39/6 |

20×16 cradle 50/-



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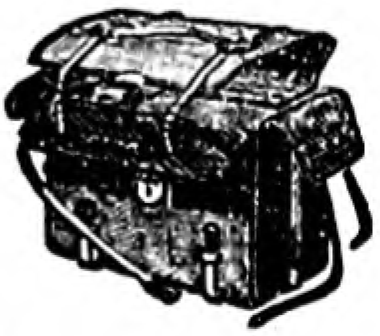
## 'OPTIMUS' CAMERA CASES

With Shoulder Straps.

LINED WITH GREEN CLOTH.

| SQUARE— | $\frac{1}{2}$ | $\frac{1}{1}$ | $\frac{10}{8}$ | $\frac{12}{10}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Canvas ... ... | 15/9 | 20/- | 21/6 | 28/- |
| Leather ... ... | 20/- | 29/- | 35/- | 46/- |

| OBLONG— | $\frac{1}{4}$ | $\frac{1}{2}$ | $\frac{1}{1}$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| Canvas only ... | 10/6 | 15/- | 20/- |



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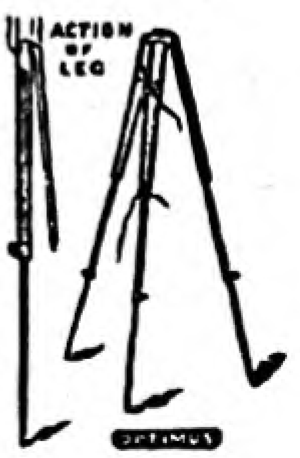
## 'OPTIMUS' PORTABLE STANDS

| | $\frac{1}{4}$ | $\frac{1}{2}$ | $\frac{1}{1}$ | $\frac{10}{8}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | s. d. | s. d. | s. d. | s. d. |
| Telescopic, with sliding leg adjustment, rigid ... ... | 8 6 | 9 6 | 10 9 | 16 9 |
| Folding Ash, with Bayonet joint, 'E. P,' very rigid | 9 9 | 10 9 | 12 6 | 20 3 |
| Telescopic Ash, with sliding leg adjustment, 'Maudsley' pattern... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 18 6 | 19 9 | 20 9 | 24 9 |
| Telescopic Ash, 3-fold, as sketch ... ... ... ... | ... | 22 0 | 24 0 | 29 0 |
| 'OPTIMUS' Stand, very rigid, and much recommended for large sizes ... ... ... ... ... ... | ... | 15 0 | 16 0 | 22 6 |
| Pine Studio Stands, with rack ... ... ... ... | ... | ... | ... | 43 9 |
| Mahogany ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | ... | ... | ... | 78 9 |



Rigid 4-fold Tripod, 16-inches long when closed, 20/-

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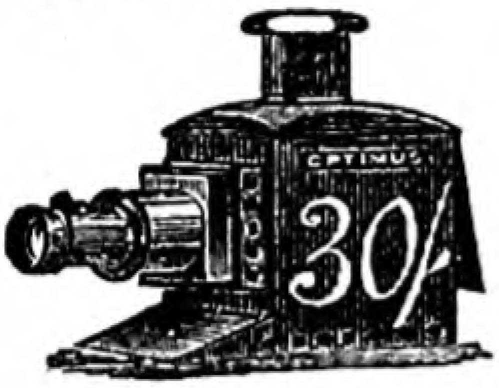
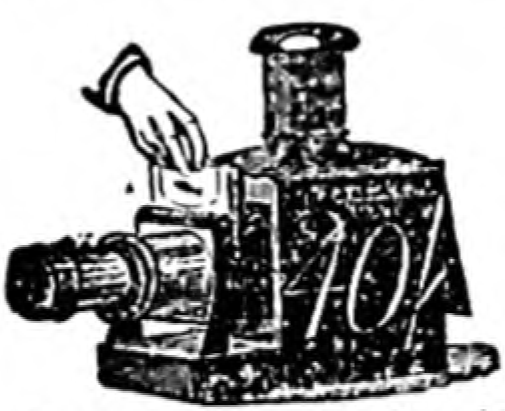
## MAGIC LANTERNS.

*Adapted for use with Limelight. For dissolving, Two Lanterns are necessary.*

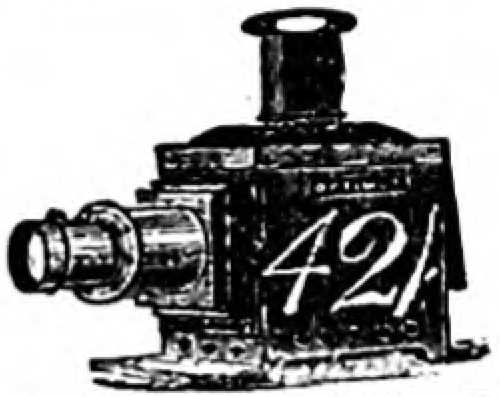
**Each Magic Lantern is efficient for exhibitions. The Lens gives crisp definition, being a superior Achromatic Photographic Combination (large diameter black lens), with rack and pinion. It is fitted to a telescopic lengthening tube, so gaining increased focal accommodation. The Condenser is composed of two plano-convex lenses of four inches diameter. The refulgent lamp has three wicks (or four wicks 2s. extra), yielding a brilliantly-illuminated picture.—Each is complete in box.**



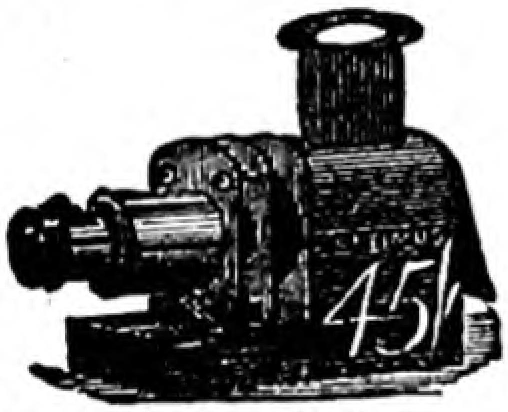
**Japanned Metal.**
**30/-**



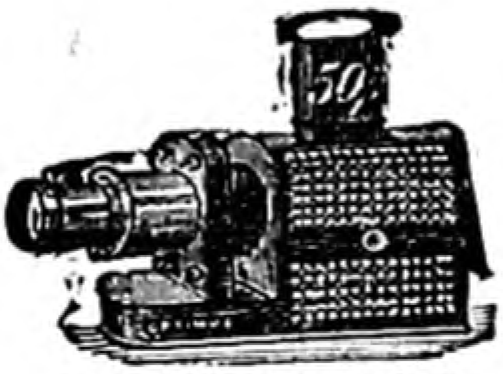
**Student's Lantern (to take demonstrating tank), finished Brass Sliding Tubes.**
**40/-**



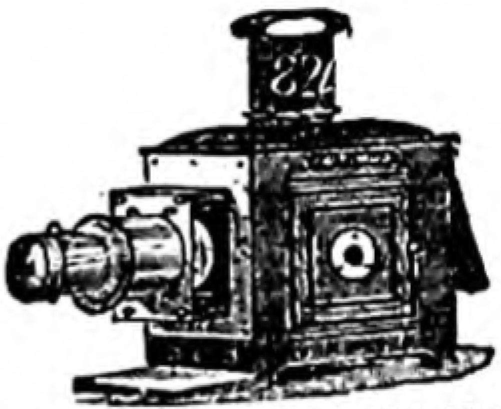
**Mahogany outside Body, Japanned Metal Stages and Sliding Tubes.**
**42/-**



**Russian Iron Body, Brass Sliding Tubes,**
**45/-**



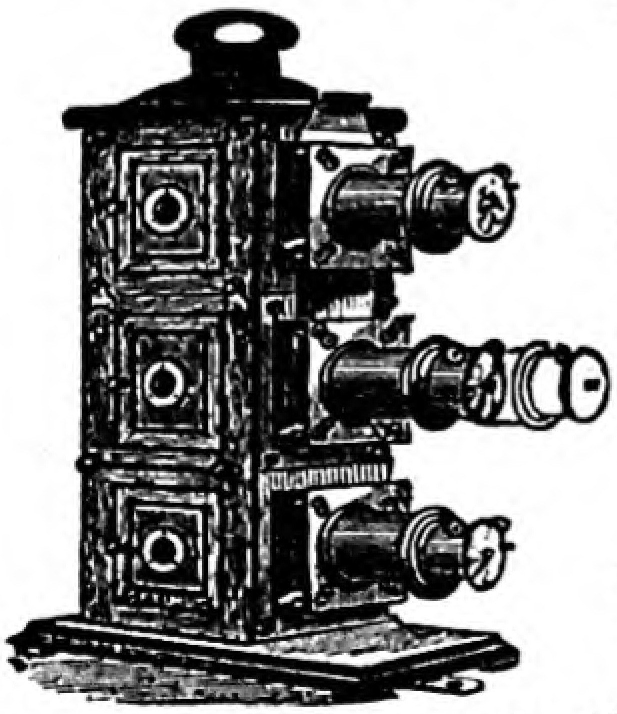
**Perforated Russian Iron Body, Brass Sliding Tubes.**
**50/-**



**Mahogany outside Body, 2 Panelled Doors, Brass Stages, and Sliding Tubes,**
**82/-**

## 'OPTIMUS' BI-UNIAL LANTERN. FOR LIME-LIGHT.

*The Top Lantern may be used separately with Oil Lamp.*



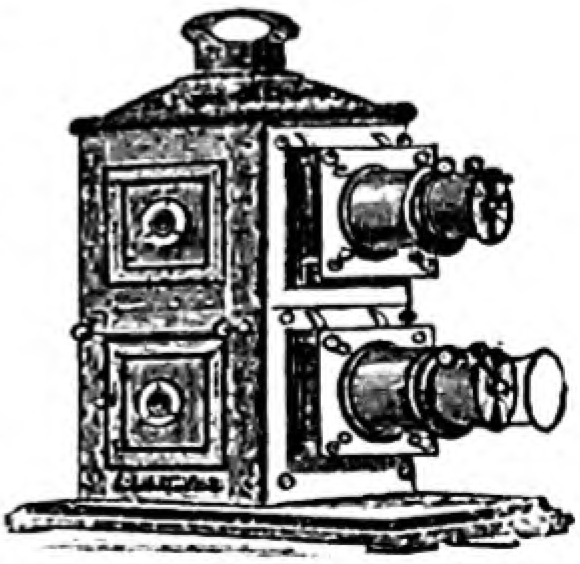
**Seasoned Mahogany Body, 4 Panelled Doors, and Moulded Foot, picked out with black, Japanned Stages and Tubes, Achromatic Photographic Front Lens, Compound Condensers ... ... £5 12 0**

**Do., do., with Brass Stages and Sliding Tubes £8 8 0**

*If fitted with 3-draw Telescope Tubes and Four Front Lenses, £6 6s. Two Gas Jets, 22s. Dissolving Tap, 17s.*

## 'OPTIMUS' TRIPLE LANTERN

### For Limelight.



**Seasoned Mahogany Body, 4 Panelled Doors, Moulded Foot, picked out with black, Brass Stages and Tubes, Achromatic Front Lenses, Compound Condensers, £14 10/-**

*If fitted with 3-draw Telescopic Tubes and Six Front Lenses, £8 8s. Three Gas Jets, 33s. Patent Triple Dissolving Tap, 33s.*

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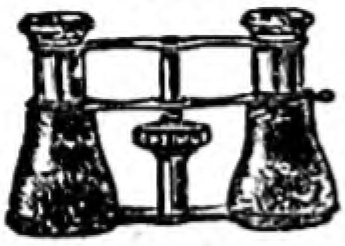
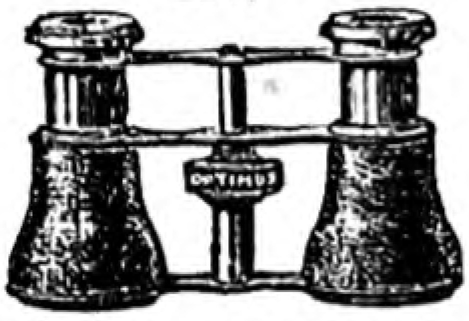
## ‘OPTIMUS’

Dwarf Opera,
Leather Covered,
15/-



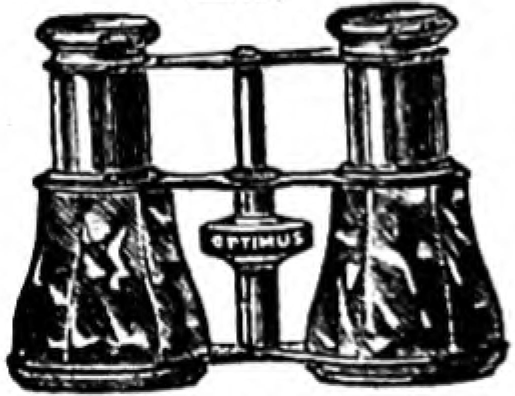
## ‘OPTIMUS’

Guinea Opera,
Morocco Covered,
21/-



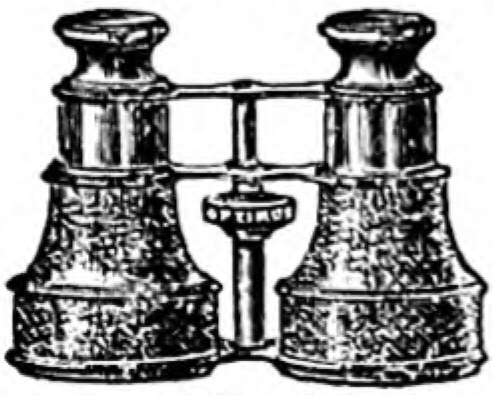
## ‘OPTIMUS’

Pearl Opera,
25/-

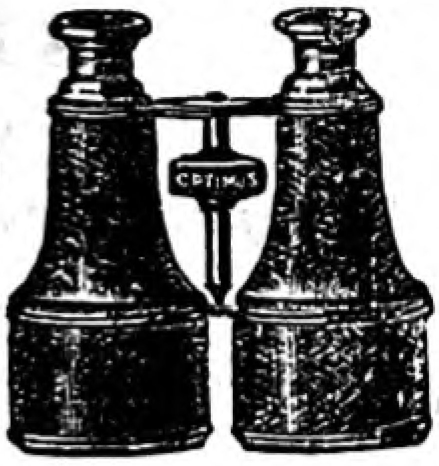


## ‘OPTIMUS’

Alluminium
50/- Opera.

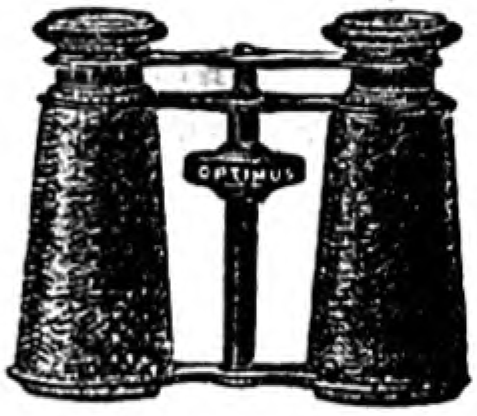


## ‘OPTIMUS’ ECONOMIC FIELD-GLASS



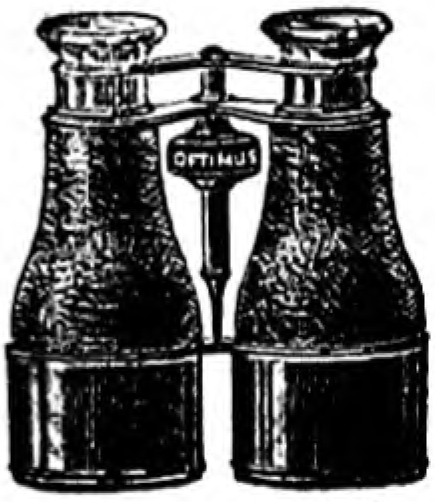
| | |
|---|---|
| Small Size ... ... ... ...<br>Clear Definition ... ... ...<br>Good Field of View ... ...<br>Magnifying 16 times ... ... | 21/- |

## ‘OPTIMUS’ SCORER.



| | |
|---|---|
| Is unrivalled for excellence and cheapness. It shows the number of People in Boats four miles distant, Sea-Birds one mile distant, and Bullet-marks on Target at 600 yards ... ... ... ... ... Magnifying 25 times... | 30/- |

## ‘OPTIMUS’ SCOUT.



| | |
|---|---|
| Medium Size... ... ...<br>Clear Definition ... ...<br>Good Field ... ... ...<br>High Magnifying Power (64 times)... | 70/- |

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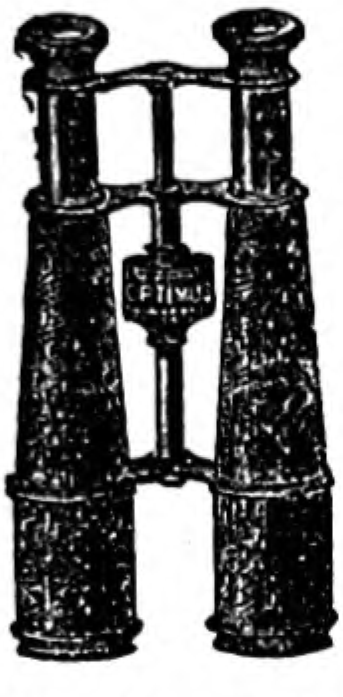

| | |
|---|---|
| This Instrument has Bending Bar for Exact Visual Adjustment ... ... ... ...<br>The size is Moderate... ... ...<br>The Definition is Crisp ... ...<br>Very high (144 times) Magnifying ... ... ... ... ... | 100/- |
| If with Shades, as Diagram ... | 125/- |

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